

TRANSITIONING FROM CLASSICAL TO CHARISMATIC PENTECOSTALISM
IN THE BAHAMAS:
THE CAUSES AND THE EFFECT

A THESIS-PROJECT
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DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

BY
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To my grandparents: Samuel and Margaret Ferguson and Joseph and Rachel Flowers,
who caught the vision of the new Pentecostal movement in the early 1920s when it was
first introduced to the island of Exuma in the Bahamas, at a time when it was not
popular to be associated with this type of worship. Their conviction and determination
was so strong that they joyfully volunteered their home as a place where worship
services were held until a church building was secured.

May the memory of their sacrifices and commitment to our God continue to inspire
generations yet unborn.

And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as
the Spirit gave them utterance.

—Acts 2:4, King James Version

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ABSTRACT

This thesis-project was designed to determine if there was any transitioning from classical to charismatic Pentecostalism in the Bahamas, and the causes and the effects.

Classical Pentecostalism has been the mainstay of the Pentecostal movement in the Bahamas since 1909, when it was first introduced. However, less than fifty years ago, while many Bahamians were obtaining tertiary-level education at Bible schools, universities, and seminaries in the United States, they were introduced to the charismatic movement. These persons came from a diverse spiritual background, but they brought back home with them this new spiritual experience and began a new opportunity for worship. Their developmental process in the Bahamas did not encounter as much fierce opposition as classical Pentecostals did in the early twentieth century but also did not escape some level of it.

Through the use of a structured multiple-choice questionnaire, details of the changing demographics of the Pentecostal movement were collected, examined, and analyzed to provide a better understanding of the growth and development over the years of its existence in the Bahamas.

Based on the responses to the survey, several recommendations were made which would help to improve training, increase membership, and cause the movement as a whole to have a greater impact in its communities.

CHAPTER ONE

THE PROBLEM AND ITS SETTING

Introduction

The Commonwealth of the Bahamas is an archipelagic nation which is situated fifty miles off the southeastern coast of Florida and runs down to the northeastern coast of Cuba. These islands were originally occupied by the Lucayan Indians, who were obliterated by diseases introduced by Europeans and by Columbus, who carried them off to Cuba to work as slaves. This peace-loving tribe of Indians which originated on the South American mainland did everything to avoid conflict with other tribes.

In their search for peace the Arawaks pushed ever onwards in their dug-out canoes. They reached Haiti around 200 A.D., going on to settle Cuba and Jamaica within the next two centuries. Some time between 500 and 600 A.D. they came to the southern and central Bahamas, the last wave of their great migration.¹

According to Craton, "The Lucayans were in fact Arawaks, a word that meant 'meal-eaters' in their own language, from their dependence upon cassava flour made from bitter manioc roots as their staple starch food."² However, following this devastating act of depopulation, the islands were occupied for a time by the French, the Spaniards, and pirates of every type. Finally, the British government took control and started a series of inventions which eventually developed community and the beginning of an ordered society.

17. ¹ Michael Craton, *A History of the Bahamas*, 3rd ed. (Waterloo, ON: San Salvador Press, 1986),

² Craton, *A History of the Bahamas*, 17.

The late nineteenth century and the early twentieth century was a period of birth in the Bahamas when a generation who would later become the pioneers and foundation members of a new religious movement would begin their spiritual formation. They were the grandchildren of slaves, sons and daughters of Anglicans, Catholics, Methodists, and Baptists, which were the established denominations in the country at that time. However, to a large extent, the problem was that most if not all of these denominations were protective of their congregants and their manner of worship; therefore, leaders in particular viewed any new introduction into the religious arena with skepticism and hostility. This new group was worshipping in a manner that was completely contrary to the orthodoxy of the established churches but was still attracting the attention of the crowds. The worship services were spirited and spontaneous, and the people were clapping hands, dancing, shouting, and falling. As A. J. Tomlinson noted:

They began to kneel and we began to pray when presently one fell over and began to scream and this created quite a little stir, soon another fell and another and another and on and on until the floor was filled with seekers down under the power. Some would try to move or help them and they too would fall under the power and such a time as this island had never seen before.³

The islands of the Bahamas, which were still under the dark and heavy mantle of colonialism, leaned heavily toward the European religious way of life and in particular the British pattern. The capital, Nassau, became a city only when an Anglican cathedral was established in June 1862 and was known as the State Church. However, under a

³ Lillie Duggar, *A. J. Tomlinson: Former General Overseer of the Church of God* (Cleveland, TN: White Wing Publishing House, 1969), 112.

thin mental and spiritual veil which covered a segment of the inhabitants was a desire to experience a deeper spiritual relationship that touched the emotions of the heart, brought answers to prayers, and brought miraculous acts of healing as well as relief from oppression. For those who yearned for this type of experience, there was a spiritual vacuum. Therefore, when people were presented with the opportunity for such an experience, their interest was heightened and they were drawn to get involved. This problem had its genesis from emancipation, because the established church was reluctant to make any effort to convert the negro slaves; however, as Craton states, "The Dissenters had no such scruples and found among the slaves and free negroes the eager material for a religious revolution."⁴ The early twentieth century provided this window of opportunity to those who so desired, and out of this experience the Pentecostal movement began its journey in the Bahamas.

From 1729, when the British government took control of the Bahama Islands, a royal governor was always resident in the country representing the king or queen of England. In 1910 His Excellency G. B. Haddon Smith was governor and commander in chief of these islands, and according to Craton and Saunders, "The estimated population of the Bahamas in 1911 was 55,944."⁵

Among the denominations in the Bahamas, the Bethel Baptist Church, then called "Bethel Meeting House,"⁶ had its first structure built in 1801 by Prince William, and by 1909 it had spread out to Fox Hill in the east and Gambier in the west. "The

⁴ Craton, A. *History of the Bahamas*, 170.

⁵ Michael Craton and Gail Saunders, *Islanders in the Stream: A History of the Bahamian People*, vol. 2: *The Ending of Slavery to the 21st Century* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1998), 182.

⁶ "Bethel Baptist Church History," accessed June 8, 2017, <http://www.bethelbaptistchurch-bahamas.org/our-history/>.

Presbyterian Kirk was built in 1810,”⁷ “the Methodist were fully settled by 1800,”⁸ and the “Catholics who were the latest to join this group of religious denominations only laid a foundation for their first church in 1885.”⁹

At the turn of the twentieth century there were no Pentecostal churches established in the Bahama Islands and no one promoting its cause. This style of enthusiastic corporate worship with lively singing, clapping of hands, dancing, and praising God was unheard of in the churches and was considered to be out of order and socially unacceptable. However, all of this was soon to come to an end, as several Bahamians who were in search of improving their economic status in life traveled to Florida to work on farms and in the construction industry.

By 1892 when the population of Key West had reached twenty-four thousand, at least eight thousand were of Bahamian origin, of whom a majority were non-whites (compared with nine thousand Cubans). The deterioration of conditions in the Bahamian pineapple, sisal and sponging industries accelerated by US protectionism and the not unrelated acquisition of alternative sources of supply after 1897 (notably the Philippines and Hawaii) increased the number of Bahamians eager to migrate.¹⁰

One of these individuals was “Edmond Barr, who was born in 1868 to Edward and Frances Barr in Exuma, one of the Bahamian islands.”¹¹ One year after he moved to Florida, “he married Rebecca Clayton a native of Georgia in 1893 in Acadia, Desoto

⁷ “Our History,” St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Kirk, accessed June 8, 2017, http://www.standrewskirk.com/our_history.htm.

⁸ “History,” The Bahamas Conference of the Methodist Church, accessed June 7, 2017, <http://www.bahamasmethodist.org>.

⁹ Patricia Ginton-Meicholas, *From the Void to the Wonderful: A History of the Roman Catholic Church in The Bahamas* (Nassau, The Bahamas: Guanima Press, 1995), 27.

¹⁰ Craton and Saunders, *The Ending of Slavery to the 21st Century*, 218.

¹¹ Florida State Board of Health, Bureau of Vital Statistics, *Florida Deaths 1877–1939, Putnam County* (Florida, 1925, No. 14920), 269.

County Florida.”¹² Barr attended a camp meeting near Durant, Florida, in 1909. There he received the baptism of the Holy Ghost, joined the Church of God, and was credentialed as a minister. In November of this same year he and his wife returned to his native Bahamas as the first missionaries for the Church of God to share the good news of his newly found Pentecostal conversion and way of worshipping God. As he would soon find out, his task and mission would not be as easy or as pleasant as he would have expected it to be because what he was introducing was strange and new to the natives. What they were doing was planting the seeds for a paradigm shift that would revolutionize the religious platform in the country. Edmond and Rebecca were like David and Goliath among the denominations, as all of them had a base from which to work, but the Pentecostals were standing all alone.

Because of the Anglican Church’s ties to the British government, it was regarded as the State Church and was able to bring much influence to bear on the Legislative Council as far as persons who would serve on government boards and other places of influence in the colony. Craton gives one such example: “In an Act of 1795, however, the church was given the income from liquor licences and the Vestry was granted the supervision of weights and measures and the management of the public market. In the same year another Act created five new parishes throughout the islands.”¹³ As it relates to the infrastructure of the colony during this period, it was very limited, and what existed was far from the modern amenities of the twenty-first century. A communication cable was laid between Florida and Nassau, the Bahamas, only in 1892.

¹² *Florida Marriages 1837–1934*, State of Florida, Desoto County, 1894, vol. 1, 173.

¹³ Craton, *A History of the Bahamas*, 170.

In 1906, telephones were introduced to Nassau, and in 1908, electricity began to be distributed to various businesses and the homes of the wealthy in the city. Craton writes,

After an abortive measure in 1873, the Telegraph Act was passed in 1891 and in the following year a telegraph connection was opened between Cable Beach, Nassau and Jupiter Florida, which made it possible to send messages direct to the United States and even to England . . . In Nassau itself, the telephone system, after several private ventures had failed was established by the government in 1907, two years before an adequate system of electricity supply was installed.¹⁴

Roads were still narrow, unpaved, and used only by bicycles and horse-drawn carriages and drays. No water was piped to the houses, and the supplies used in homes came either from a well, drawn by hand, or from a water tank which held rainwater. Craton and Saunders state, “Even more dangerous was the water supply, drawn either (for preference) from rain water barrels and cisterns or from wells that tapped a water table increasingly polluted from the simple earth privies.”¹⁵

The economy of the Bahamas was sustained by the sponge industry, farming for citrus and pineapples, and the harvesting of salt. There was no big cash flow in the economy, as wages were very low and paying jobs were hard to find. For the most part those who had jobs either worked for the government as civil servants or for wealthy foreigners as domestic workers. The Post Office Bank was the only place to save money; the Royal Bank of Canada, which was the first commercial bank to operate in the Bahamas, never opened its doors for business in the Bahamas until November 1908.

¹⁴ Craton, *A History of the Bahamas*, 247.

¹⁵ Craton and Saunders, *Islanders in the Stream*, Vol. 2, 102.

Even at this time the majority of the people had very little money to put in the Post Office Bank or the Royal Bank of Canada because of their low level of earnings.

Contributing to this low level of earnings was the fact that there were few government schools and all attendees had to leave at the age of fourteen. There were no institutions of higher education in the country at that time. High school education for students beyond the age of fourteen came into existence much later. Referring to the first government high school, Mackey Williams wrote, “The school opened its doors on the 27th of April 1925 at 10:00 am. The number of students attending the first day was two—a boy and his sister. The Rev. Robert M. Bailey and Mrs. M. L. Symonette were those children.”¹⁶

The people who lived on the island of New Providence lived either in the capital of Nassau or in the traditional areas of Bain and or Grants Town, which were the areas settled by freed slaves after the British emancipation in 1838. Further settlements of natives were found in the areas of Free Town and Fox Hill in the east and in Gambier and Adelaide in the west. These communities became the target areas for evangelism and outreach and eventually became the first areas where Pentecostal churches were established.

Edmond Barr and Rebecca Barr, the first Pentecostal missionaries to the Bahamas who were sent out by the Church of God, came into an environment that was not welcoming and gracious to them and their message; in many cases the established churches were hostile to one another. These churches were trying not only to exert

¹⁶ Mackey Williams, “The History of Government High School,” *Nassau Guardian*, Bahamas, September 25, 1989.

their own prominence but also at the same time were making every effort to keep others out of the religious arena. They saw other churches as a threat to their own progress. A brief examination of the four main denominations at that time would reveal that while for the most part they were established, there was either fighting among them for positions of leadership and authority or they were not generally pleased with the level of leadership being provided by their international or regional offices.

Religious Denominations

The Baptist Church

Bethel was the first Baptist church to be organized and built on the island of New Providence. Freed slaves Prince Williams and Sambo Scriven from Florida were the leaders in this effort. The church's history as recorded on its website states, "According to tradition, the 'society' of negro men and women met in a thatched building on which the present Bethel Baptist Church stands until the signatures of five freed men could be obtained to sign the deed." The ground-breaking service for this house of worship was held on Monday, August 1, 1790. The church building was believed to be constructed by Prince Williams, a carpenter, and he was also its first pastor.¹⁷

In 1833, Rev. Joseph Burton, a British missionary who was fleeing Jamaica, was shipwrecked on Inagua, the most southern island of the Bahamas. He was brought to Nassau and was introduced to the colonial governor, who encouraged him to stay in the Bahamas and work with the local Baptists. As Charles Smith notes, "Rev. Burton had not

¹⁷ "Bethel Baptist Church History."

been at Bethel for very long, when problems arose, which led to the resignation of Prince Williams who left and founded St. John's Baptist Church."¹⁸ The problem was such in Bethel that not long after Prince Williams's departure, Burton himself left Bethel and became the founder of Zion Baptist Church and its first pastor. According to the account of Rev. Charles C. Smith II:

Early in 1835, on behalf of the Baptist Missionary Society Rev. Burton purchased the property on the corner of East and Shirley streets where Zion now stands. That [site] was formally the location of a shop owned by Mr. Robert Bell, who sold the property to the Baptist Missionary Society. With a few dissident members from the Bethel Baptist Church, and encouraged by some British settlers in the colony, Rev. Burton constituted the first Zion Baptist Church. On the 22nd of April 1835, he contracted a builder, Mr. William Bain of Nassau, to erect a chapel.¹⁹

Baptists displayed a great tendency for controversy and splits among their ranks in these early days of their existence over who should assume leadership roles. The Zion Baptist Church, which developed out of Bethel Baptist Church, was no exception to this rule. "In 1892 when the British Missionary Society and Zion Baptist Church chose Rev. Charles Dan to lead the work, Rev. Daniel Wilshire, with a minority group of members and churches, organized Salem Baptist Church, and the Bahamas Baptist Convention."²⁰ To this day there is a saying among Baptists in the Bahamas, especially when they are having conflicts within their congregations: "We divide to multiply."

Between 1909 and 1925, when Pentecostalism was being introduced and established in several areas of the Bahamas, Baptists would have been established for a

¹⁸ Charles C. Smith II, *A Short History of Zion United Baptist Convention* (New Providence, The Bahamas: I-EASE Publishack, 1983), 256.

¹⁹ Smith, *Short History of Zion United Baptist Convention*, 256.

²⁰ Smith, *Short History of Zion United Baptist Convention*, 257.

long time in Nassau and several of the Family islands. They would have gone through several splits and would have formed themselves into at least three distinct denominational organizations.

The Methodist Church

By the early twentieth century, the Methodists had also been in the Bahamas for some time. However, they were under direct supervision of the British church and therefore had no significant impact even after one hundred years. As with other churches with European roots, they were steeped in the British traditions and style of worship. On their webpage, the Bahamas Conference of the Methodist Church quotes Colbert Williams, who wrote *The Methodist Contribution to the Bahamas*, as saying, “In 1799 the British Methodist Conference meeting in Manchester decided to station William Turton, a white Barbadian, in the Bahamas. He landed at Nassau on 22nd October, 1800.”²¹

It was not until 1960 when the British Methodist Conference considered that the Caribbean, the Bahamas, and Central and South America were matured enough to form a conference of their own. “The Bahamas was hesitant, having little in common with many of the territories of the Caribbean and Latin America.”²² This conference was not formalized until 1967, and even at that time the Bahamas did not join. It was not until 1968 that the Bahamas joined the Methodist Conference of the Caribbean and the

²¹ “History,” The Bahamas Conference of the Methodist Church, accessed June 7, 2017, <http://www.bahamasmethodist.org>.

²² “History.”

Americas (MCCA). It is obvious that the Bahamas still had some concerns, because “within a few years, it was obvious that the new Conference was not structured for missions and a committee was set up to make proposals for the restructuring of the church for missions.”²³ This entire process ended abruptly in 1989, and when the Bahamas Turks and Caicos questioned as to why the process ended they were not given what they deemed a satisfactory response. All of this led to a time of internal conflict between the Bahamas and the MCCA which eventually ended with the Bahamas separating from the Conference of the Caribbean and the Americas and forming its own conference. “The Methodist Church of the Bahamas was formed in July 1993 by an Act of the Bahamas Parliament.”²⁴

This new Methodist conference has made significant steps since its formation, and Kenris Carey will be a memorable name in their history. “An important milestone for Methodism in the Bahamas was reached when Mrs. Carey was elected as the first woman as well as the first layperson to serve as President, the highest office in the Conference.”²⁵ Their newly obtained autonomy has provided for them greater opportunities to be relevant and effective in the nation to do ministry, “such as the management of the Bilney Lane Children’s Home, Nurse Naomi Christie Home for The Aged, Hurricane/Disaster Relief, later to become Methodist Habitat, the training and licensing of Pastors, the training and ordaining of Ministers of Word and Sacraments.”²⁶

²³ “History.”

²⁴ “History.”

²⁵ “History.”

²⁶ “History.”

The conference has also been able to build a stronger relationship with other churches within and without their denomination.

The Catholic Church in the Bahamas

It was in 1837 that Pope Gregory XVI placed the Lucayans or Bahama Islands under the authority of the newly established Vicariate Apostolic of Jamaica. However, there were no churches established or services being held in the Bahamas. In 1845 a visiting priest from Jamaica who was on his way to America was able to minister to several Catholics in a private home. To improve the connection with the members in the Bahamas and the general church, the Bahamas was moved from the jurisdiction of Jamaica and placed under Charleston, South Carolina, in the United States. It later was moved to the jurisdiction of New York and several years later to Jamaica again. However, there were no resident priests to minister to members in the Bahamas. The Sisters of Charity came to the Bahamas in 1890 and soon started work as teachers for poor black and white children. They were followed a few months later by the Benedictine priests, who came to the Bahamas from Minnesota to minister in a similar way. Fr. Chrysostom Schreiner arrived in Nassau on February 2, 1891. "When Schreiner took up his post, the congregation of St. Francis numbered about 70, and the Bahama Islands were struggling to move into the 20th century with the introduction of the telegraph."²⁷

²⁷ Glinton-Meicholas, *From the Void to the Wonderful*, 27.

Prior to 1960, Catholics in the Bahamas were under the jurisdiction of the Diocese of Jamaica. "On July 5, 1960, the Vicariate of the Bahama Islands was raised to the dignity of a Diocese. Paul Leonard Hagarty, a Benedictine Priest of St. John's Abby Minnesota was installed as the first Bishop of Nassau."²⁸ The second Catholic bishop of the Bahamas was The Most Reverend Lawrence Aloysius Burke, who was installed in July 1981. A native of Jamaica, he served in this capacity until he was appointed to serve as Archbishop of Kingston in February 2004.²⁹ To date, only one Bahamian has been elevated to serve as the head of the Catholic Church in the Bahamas. "In 2003, Patrick Christopher Pinder was ordained the first Bahamian Bishop. He served as Auxiliary Bishop and, in the very next year, Bishop Pinder was installed as archbishop of Nassau."³⁰

The Anglican Church

The most dominant religious denomination in the Bahamas in the early twentieth century was the Anglican Church, which was directly connected to the government due to the islands being a colony. The colonial masters were British and part of the Anglican (Episcopal) Church. This status gave the church and its leaders some direct advantages which others did not enjoy in this period. "In 1670 the Bahamas was granted to the Lord Proprietors of Carolina by the English Crown. Among the

²⁸ "History," Archdiocese of Nassau, accessed June 9, 2017, <http://www.archdioceseofnassau.org/index.php/aboutarchdiocese/history>.

²⁹ "History," Bahamas Conference of the Methodist Church.

³⁰ "History," Archdiocese of Nassau.

requirements of this grant was the establishment of churches in the islands.”³¹ This is the reason for several religious holidays which are celebrated or commemorated on a national level: Good Friday, Easter Monday, Whit Monday, Boxing Day, and Empire Day. All of these, with the exception of Boxing Day and Empire Day, are part of the Anglican religious tradition commemorating the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus. National holidays have been called bank holidays in Britain since the late nineteenth century.”³² Boxing Day (the day after Christmas), also referred to as St. Stephen’s Day, is “a national holiday in the UK where families eat leftovers or head to the stores to nab the latest deals much like Black Friday.”³³ Ben Johnson notes, “Each Empire Day millions of children from all walks of life across the length and breadth of the British Empire would typically salute the Union Flag and sing patriotic songs like Jerusalem and God Save the Queen.”³⁴ Further, the appointed governor, the magistrates, and the judges were British, and they all attended the Anglican Church.

As could be guessed, the coming of the Loyalists had a decided effect upon the religious life of the colony. The American Tories, were traditionally strong supporters of the Anglican establishment and except for the Presbyterians who founded St. Andrew’s Kirk in 1810, the Loyalist once they had gained the power in the Legislature, did all they could to place the Church of England on a firm basis.³⁵

According to Thompson,

³¹ Gilbert A. Thompson, comp., “History: Diocesan History,” Anglican Diocese of The Bahamas and the Turks and Caicos Islands, accessed June 9, 2017, http://www.bahtcianglican.org/history_.

³² Fern Afrin, “National or Bank Holidays in the United Kingdom,” accessed August 15, 2017, <http://www.tripsavvy.com/national-bank-holiday-in-the-uk-1662378>.

³³ Zoe Mintz, “Media and Culture,” accessed August 15, 2017, <http://www.ibtimes.com/what-boxing-day-3-facts-you-need-know-about-British-holiday-1519950>.

³⁴ Ben Johnson, “Empire Day,” Historic UK, accessed June 26, 2017, <http://www.historic-uk.com/HistoryUK/HistoryofBritain/Empire-Day/>.

³⁵ Craton, *A History of the Bahamas*, 168.

The Anglican Church has been integrally involved with the life of the nation since inception. Imitating the English model of the Crown as head of national life which included church and State, Royal Governors have forwarded the development of political, social cultural and educational life. The English clergy have assisted the Governors and Parliament in cultivating ordered societies based on Christian principles and the rule of law.³⁶

While much has changed since the early days of colonialism and the singular dominant church with its direct government connections, the Anglican Church still plays a significant role in Bahamian society through its clergy and other ministry, including its involvement in education from preschool up to the high school level. As stated in the records of its history, "The Charges made by our Bishops at the opening of Synod and other directives still help to direct the course of our nation."³⁷

During the first quarter of the twentieth century, when Pentecostalism was being introduced and was taking roots in the Bahamas, the Anglican Church would have been headed by its sixth and seventh British bishops: Richard Bird Hornby, who served from 1904 to 1918, and Roscow Shedden, who served from 1919 to 1931.³⁸

Introduction of Pentecostalism to the Bahamas

Although still deep in the jaws of colonialism in the early twentieth century, in its development the Bahamas was at a turning point. Modern communication in the form of the telegraph was now in the making, and electricity was made available to the privileged few. The major industry, sponging, was still vibrant, which kept seamen as

³⁶ Thompson, "History: Diocesan History."

³⁷ Thompson, "History: Diocesan History."

³⁸ Thompson, "History: Diocesan History."

well as a small percentage of women busy. Due to the introduction of modern technology there was now hope for expansion of the economy.

Spiritually, the Baptists were still having turmoil within their ranks. The Catholics were small in numbers and without a resident bishop, and the Methodists were also without local leaders or a significant number of members. The Anglican Church had the only trained clergy in the nation; all of their clergy were all recruited from England and served in various capacities in the Bahamas because of their training and exposure to the British system of governance. With this social, political, and religious setting in the Bahamas, problems of all kinds were inevitable. Therefore, those who were “taking up their cross to follow Jesus” and introducing the Bahamas to Pentecostalism were in for “the best of times as well as the worst of times,” which meant challenges, challenges, and more challenges from multiple sources.

Edmond Barr Returns Home with His Wife, Rebecca

Three significant journeys were made to the Bahamas between 1909 and 1911. The first was made by Edmond Barr and his wife, Rebecca, who came after their conversion. They were both full of zeal and had a great desire to spread the gospel to the lost beyond where they presently lived. In Edmond’s testimony of his baptism of the Holy Ghost, he wrote,

the Pleasant Grove Camp Meeting has been a wonderful benefit to me, and young as I was in the experience, it was great nourishment to my spiritual welfare. Before I received the Baptism, I had been sanctified for six years and the light came of the Baptism . . . after fasting for some time I put all on the altar and

said, "This hour, Lord" and I paid the price and obtained the prize, and the Holy Ghost came in that hour and spoke for himself.³⁹

The finances to sponsor the Barrs' mission trip to the Bahamas was organized by R. M. Evans and other believers who shared in the vision that Evans had of Bahamians crying out to bring the gospel to their shores. The safe arrival of the Barrs in the Bahamas is well documented:

after leaving Miami, on our way to Nassau on the sail boat, the weather was very unfavorable, but I and husband prayed to the Lord that, He would give us favorable wind and the Lord answered our prayer. Just before we closed our prayer the wind turned in our favor; the sailor hoisted their sail and began to sail and the dear Lord landed us safe in Nassau. Thursday evening, praise His holy name . . . we do earnestly want the saints to pray for us for the saving of souls.⁴⁰

The traditional churches, especially in New Providence, were not interested in the new Pentecostal movement, but God was with the Barrs and was working on their behalf. What they preached and believed was soon to be more than just words and would be the means of convincing some of the naysayers that there was validity in their message and their faith. Having been denied entry in the churches in the community, Edmond and Rebecca Barr had to use the highways and hedges of this little town to get their message across to the residents. Their breakthrough came in a major way when a well-known member of the Baptist church on the island was sick. She was the organist at Bethel Baptist Church and lived on Meadow Street, where the Barrs were preaching. On hearing their message that included the power to heal, she invited them to her

³⁹ Edmund S. Barr, "Nassau N.P. Bahamas," *The Evening Light and the Church of God Evangel*, October 1, 1910, 7.

⁴⁰ Rebecca Barr, "Nassau Bahamas, West Indies," *The Bridegroom's Messenger*, January 1910, 2.

house, and they gladly embraced the opportunity to minister to her. “They prayed for her, they laid hands on her, and she was healed. Not only was her body healed but she, the organist of Bethel Baptist Church, saw a new light and was determined to follow it and her Christ.”⁴¹

Mrs. Arabella Eneas was believed to be one of the first converts of the Barrs in the Bahamas. In her own words, she gave two powerful testimonies. First was one of salvation and healing, and the other of affirmation: “Praise the Lord, this morning for saving, sanctifying and filling me with the Holy Ghost. I am praising him because he is my Saviour, my healer, and my all in all, thank God for the blood has power.”⁴² Then, “I can praise the Lord for sending Bro and Sis Barr here to our country to preach and teach holiness.”⁴³

Further, the Barrs, who had no building in which to hold meetings, were blessed with a meeting place. “Arabella Eneas’ husband, Wilmore V. Eneas, a man of great influence and means in the Bain Town Community, became interested in the ministry of the Barrs after his wife was miraculously healed. Shortly afterwards, he turned over a large hall to the Evangelist in which he was able to conduct his meetings.”⁴⁴ Even though this was a major blessing to their ministry, there was more to come.

⁴¹ Cleveland W. Eneas, *Let the Church Roll On* (Nassau, the Bahamas: Cleveland and Muriel Eneas Publishers, 1976), 3.

⁴² Arabella Eneas, “Testimony of Salvation and Healing,” *The Evening Light and the Church of God Evangel* (Cleveland, TN), June 10, 1910, 5.

⁴³ Eneas, “Testimony,” 7.

⁴⁴ Alvin S. Moss, “A Brief History of the Bahamas,” *White Wing Messenger*, February 16, 1967, 5.

Robert Milton Evans Follows a Vision for Missions

The second important visit made during the period of 1909 to 1911 was that of Robert Milton Evans, who was accompanied by his wife, Ida; their foster son, Robert Moreland; and a young preacher by the name of Carl M. Padgett. Coincidentally this group of bold missionaries sailed from Miami on a sailboat names *Fearless* and arrived in Nassau on January 4, 1910. Their first task after securing accommodations in Deveau Street near Dowdeswell Street was to find Edmond and Rebecca Barr and join forces with them in their mission to spread the Pentecostal message. While they were still holding street meetings, they expanded their ministry to home visitation, which was found to be rather effective, as many did not want to commit to the message in open-air services. The cry was soon sent out for help with music and visitation. "A great deal can be accomplished by visiting the people in their homes."⁴⁵

The work that was done by these pioneers, a black and a white missionary team, resembled that which was done initially at Azusa Street when many nationalities worked harmoniously together. It was effective and inspirational and was therefore the catalyst for the spread of the message around the world. Conn notes that "their partnership was historic and exemplary; a testimony of what brethren can do when their hearts are together. Theirs was an unintended, but obvious prototype of many alliances to follow."⁴⁶ Progress was being made as these missionaries labored day and night

⁴⁵ Mrs. R. M. Evans, "Nassau N.P. Bahama Islands," *The Evening Light and Church of God Evangel*, April 1, 1910, 6.

⁴⁶ Charles W. Conn, *Like a Mighty Army* (Cleveland, TN: Pathway Press, 1996), 131.

spreading the gospel. In a report to General Headquarters at Cleveland, Tennessee, Edmund Barr wrote,

souls are being saved and sanctified and filled with the Holy Ghost; also, we have the church established here. Wife and I are burdened down with the work. All the saints are well and doing all we can to publish Jesus and his gospel. We want you and all the saints to pray for us and that the Church of God may be established more out here.⁴⁷

During the second journey, the Pentecostal message was preached not only in Nassau, but also on the Eleuthera when Evans, his wife, and Padgett visited that island. It was on this visit that Padgett received the Holy Ghost, and many were amazed by the supernatural experience which they had never seen before in the settlement of Current. While the visit to Eleuthera was short, they were privileged to minister in the settlements of Tarpum Bay, Governor's Harbour, Cove, Bougue, Current, Bluff, Spanish Wells, and Harbour Island. Barr also, on invitation, visited Gregory Town in Eleuthera in June 1910 and after three weeks reported, "the Lord saved forty-nine and sanctified 5 with the blessed Holy Ghost."⁴⁸

Within this first year (1909–1910), much work was being done and much had been accomplished, but all was achieved with much persecution. Rebecca Barr reported to the church world the testimony of Arabella Eneas:

Since the Lord has wonderfully saved and sanctified me and given me the blessed Holy Ghost, praise the Lord, I live happy through my troubles, difficulties and disasters. On the 17th May my two houses were set fire and burned to the ground, destroying almost all my possessions; but I can give praise to God, who

⁴⁷ Edmund S. Barr, "Nassau N.P. Bahamas," *The Evening Light and the Church of God Evangel*, April 15, 1910, 7.

⁴⁸ Eneas, "Testimony," 7.

spoke to me at the time of the fire. When I came and saw my house on fire, He told me he would never leave alone. O Praise the Lord.⁴⁹

According to the Church of God magazine, *The Evangel*, A. J. Tomlinson organized the worldwide mission band in July 1910. Its purpose was to promote the gospel of Jesus Christ anywhere in the world where the Lord would direct. After several volunteers were enlisted, the first mission field as a band was Nassau, Bahamas. This was the third and most expansive journey taken by Church of God missionaries in the Bahamas. They sailed by steamship from Miami and arrived in Nassau on February 16, 1911.

Upon their arrival and meeting with Evans, they immediately began to organize services in multiple locations on the island. Two days after his arrival, Tomlinson notes in his diary, "There is a need for much work here and on the out islands. Blacks and whites, all come to the meeting together."⁵⁰ He acknowledged that progress was being made since he arrived as he intensified his efforts: "Three services a day all week; I have been preaching both at the service in the open-air and at the tent . . . the audience at the tent were becoming very attentive and much subdued under the power of the gospel."⁵¹

However, there were times of jubilation and times of distress. Tomlinson himself began to feel the opposition that was experienced by Evans and Barr, as he writes in his diary: "I have been in tough places and had hard times before, but I never struck such a

⁴⁹ Eneas, "Testimony," 7.

⁵⁰ Lillie Duggar, *A. J. Tomlinson: Former General Overseer of the Church of God* (Cleveland, TN: White Wing Publishing House, 1969), 112.

⁵¹ Duggar, *A. J. Tomlinson*, 113.

place as this before.”⁵² On Wednesday, March 15, 1911, he wrote, “We closed the meeting at tent last night. I don’t think I ever saw such an unruly crowd in my life. During the prayer at the close it was impossible to make them show any reverence to God. Of course, there was quite a number who revered God, but the majority were wild and unruly.”⁵³

Even though Tomlinson and the band had experienced ministry in Nassau, it was still his desire to visit the Out Islands (as they were called at that time). For the majority of the Out Islands, it was quite a different experience from that which they encountered in Nassau. The people were very friendly; they allowed them into their churches readily and provided accommodations, food, and transportations for the group of strangers with a new and strange message. Their missionary expedition took them to three main islands, but they had the opportunity to minister in several communities on each island. It should be noted that travel between the islands during this time was done exclusively by sailboats as no one had the means or experience with technology to operate a motor boat. The team, which included Tomlinson, J. W. Buckalew, B. Prom, Roy Miller, Padgett, E. Haynes, Mrs. Haynes, Lulu Williams, and Flora E. Bower, departed Nassau for Ragged Island but had to stop in Farmer’s Cay due to bad weather. They received a good welcome and were able to hold services in the Baptist church. They were even given food and accommodations in the homes of residents.

Departing from Farmer’s Cay, they finally arrived in Ragged island about four days after leaving Nassau and found a receptive group of people who were willing to

⁵² Duggar, *A. J. Tomlinson*, 114.

⁵³ Duggar, *A. J. Tomlinson*, 114.

accommodate them in every way from housing to feeding and hearing their message.

This was a successful trip, as in the words of Tomlinson, “Six have been converted. The captain and his mate. Numbers are accepting the truth and seeking.”⁵⁴ On his departure, he felt that the mission was accomplished. He wrote in his diary, “Goodby Ragged Island, maybe forever, but we felt a sweet assurance that we had been faithful and the gospel had been preached to them as a witness.”⁵⁵

Tomlinson and his team of workers were quite adventurous as missionaries and were determined to go wherever they felt that God was leading. In those days of slow sailboats with irregular schedules, they were still determined to go to several islands. From Ragged Island, the next trip was to Long Island, a trip of an entire day and a night sailing. Arriving on Long Island they settled in Clarence Town, where there was only a Catholic church, and it was observed by the missionaries that Catholics were not welcome by the natives. However, Tomlinson and his team were well received, treated kindly, and fed sumptuously. Tomlinson wrote, “They bring us food of all kinds, they have chickens, eggs, sweet potatoes, crabs, beans, peas, water melon, papayas, grits, sugar, etc. . . . they grind their own grits on hand mills and it was not infrequent to see two women grinding at the mill.”⁵⁶ Long Island, for this team of missionaries, was the most wonderful journey, with many coming to know the Lord. Further, up to this point on this third island there was little resistance from the locals, and from all reports the people were gladly feeding and accommodating them. Tomlinson, writing of the

⁵⁴ Duggar, *A. J. Tomlinson*, 118.

⁵⁵ Duggar, *A. J. Tomlinson*, 118.

⁵⁶ Duggar, *A. J. Tomlinson*, 120.

generosity of the locals, stated, “Three men, Maxwell Pinder, Maxwell Gray and Theophilus T. Knowles offered their schooner and services free to take us to Exuma Island.”⁵⁷

The last major island to be visited on this trip was Exuma, where they encountered different responses. Reaching Exuma and its major communities of Williams Town and Forbes Hill, it was obvious that there were no Pentecostal establishments in this area. But there were receptive hearts to the message that was being preached. In the settlement of Forbes Hill, they were so appreciated by the people that as they were preparing to leave for another place, Tomlinson notes, “they pressed us and constrained us to stay overnight so we had a very pleasant service in their little chapel at night.”⁵⁸ They also visited the communities of Harts Well and Rolle Town before reaching George Town, the capital of the island.

Tomlinson and his team returned to Nassau on April 25, approximately six weeks after they left on their mission to the islands. What he found when he arrived was a number of letters, and as he wrote, “Among them were letters from home stating the hard trials my wife and children were having. It nearly broke my heart to think I was so working for Jesus going through hardships and making sacrifices, and then my precious family at home suffering so.”⁵⁹ Fortunately, Tomlinson was able to leave Nassau the next day for Cleveland, Tennessee, where his family was awaiting his arrival, as his wife was very ill.

⁵⁷ Duggar, *A. J. Tomlinson*, 126.

⁵⁸ Duggar, *A. J. Tomlinson*, 127.

⁵⁹ Duggar, *A. J. Tomlinson*, 128.

An Evaluation

What was found by those who came to the Bahamas in the early 1900s was a religious environment that was typically opposite to that which the Pentecostal movement promoted. Pentecostal missionaries encountered problems of various kinds from different segments of the religious society. First, none of the denominations operated in the Pentecostal manner, which caused the new Pentecostal movement to be opposed by all of them. Second, individual denominations were interested in protecting their own members from leaving their church and joining this new group. Third, it was hard to find any one group that was willing to partner with them because of the fact that they all had their own internal battles for leadership or were dissatisfied with the support they were receiving from their regional or international offices. However, these three journeys to the Bahamas played a major role in laying the foundation for the classical Pentecostal movement in the Bahamas. The men and women who came were those who emerged out of the holiness movement and were then catapulted into the Pentecostal movement due to the development of the Azusa Street Revival in California, USA, which took place between 1906 and 1909.

This was the setting in the Bahamas from 1909 up to the mid-1960s, when change began to take place through Bahamians who traveled to the United States, listened to religious radio programs emanating from the United States, or watched similar programs on television. It was a message that resonated throughout the islands. What took place between 1909 and 1913 affected not only the capital of Nassau but

also the Family Islands, which were much more open to the message and provided support and commitment to those who were preaching the message.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

From the beginning of time, when God created the cosmic world and made it the place where his creation would dwell, his Spirit has been actively involved in the lives of mankind, working through them and on their behalf. The work of the Spirit, the third person of the triune God, has over the years been a topic of much debate as to his role and presence as well as to how he manifests himself in our world. The work of the Spirit of God has taken on various interpretations and has led to the development of a variety of doctrinal beliefs and the formation of multiple denominational structures, and has even engendered deep controversy within the same denominational group. Referring to Charles Mason, founder of the Church of God In Christ, Vinson Synan states, “He and the message of Pentecost were rejected by the majority of the church.”¹

This review of literature is intended to give an insight into the work of the Spirit over the years in various areas of the world and to outline the established understanding and orthopraxy associated with these understandings and what has resulted from them, including its impact in the Bahamas. Also, it is my intention to examine the teaching of Charles F. Parham. “Parham, founder of the Apostolic Faith Movement, charged his students to search the scriptures and to discover the ‘Bible evidence’ for the baptism in the Holy Spirit. The answer identified by the students gave

¹ Vinson Synan, *The Century of the Holy Spirit* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2001), 65.

birth to the Pentecostal Movement: speaking in tongues is the initial physical evidence of the baptism in the Holy Spirit.”² However, this is not supported by charismatic Pentecostals. Additionally, it is important to discuss the reasons why some persons have transitioned from classical Pentecostalism to the charismatic movement.

Pre-Pentecostal Work of the Spirit

The experience which John Wesley had at Aldersgate Street on May 24, 1738, is believed by many to have laid part of the foundation upon which the Pentecostal movement found its footing and was launched into the worldwide spiritual arena. His famous words, “my heart was strangely warmed,”³ were an utterance that indicated that a difference had taken place in his life. Wesley’s encounter with God and its contribution to Pentecostalism was further complemented by other experiences and movements, all of which combined to create an environment which opened the eyes, stirred the hearts, and ignited in believers the hunger and thirst for a deeper and stronger relationship with God. Stephen Land quoted William Arthur’s prayer in 1856 for such an encounter:

And now adorable Spirit, proceeding from the Father and the Son, descend upon all the churches, renew the Pentecost in this our age, and baptize Thy people generally—O baptize them yet again with tongues of fire! Crown this nineteenth century with a revival of “pure and undefiled religion” greater than that of the last century, greater than any “demonstration of the Spirit” even yet vouchsafed to men.⁴

² Stanley Burgess and Edward M. van der Maas, eds., *The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements: Glossolalia; Theological Nuances* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002, 2003), 673.

³ Synan, *Century of the Holy Spirit*, 2.

⁴ Stephen J. Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality: A Passion for the Kingdom* (Cleveland, TN: CPT Press, 2010), 4.

There was never a desire in Wesley's heart to start a church, but because the archbishop refused to ordain his ministers, he needed to proceed and ordained his own ministers. As Mary Fairchild notes:

Wesley did not set out to create a new church, but instead began several small faith-restoration groups within the Anglican church called the United Societies. Soon, however, Methodism spread and eventually became its own separate religion when the first conference was held in 1744. By 1787, Wesley was required to register his preachers as non-Anglicans. He, however, remained an Anglican to his death.⁵

After his conversion in the eighteenth century, "John Wesley offered his Methodist followers a 'second blessing,' which he called, 'entire sanctification,' an instant crisis experience that he also described as 'perfect love' or 'Christian perfection.'"⁶ He eventually rejected the doctrine of predestination which was embraced by his friend George Whitfield, and this created separate paths for their future.

The Holiness Movement which developed in the mid-nineteenth century was a response of some who thought it necessary not only to preserve but also to promote the tenets of faith as outlined by Wesley. These included the process of salvation, which involved the two crisis experiences of conversion or justification by faith and entire sanctification. Several other factors also spurred this renewal, including

⁵ Mary Fairchild, "What Is the Church? Church Definition: Person, Place or Thing?", ThoughtCo., April 17, 2017, accessed September 12, 2017, <https://www.thoughtco.com/what-is-the-church-700486>.

⁶ Synan, *Century of the Holy Spirit*, 15.

1. a dispute within the Methodist Church over a breakdown in discipline which eventually resulted in one segment separating themselves from the body in 1843 and another segment following in 1860;
2. camp meeting revivals, which had become quite popular;
3. the effective and ever-growing Tuesday Meetings of Phoebe Palmer in New York which attracted persons of different denominations, all seeking to satisfy what had developed as a strong hunger and thirst for a deeper relationship with God.

An offshoot that developed in the Holiness Movement was the Keswick or Higher Life Conferences, which were held in England and in Massachusetts. These groups adjusted their doctrine on second blessing from being an eradication of the sinful nature to it being the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Synan states, "This new Keswick emphasis displaced the concept of second blessing as an 'eradication' of the sinful nature in favor of 'baptism of the Holy Spirit' as an enduement of power for service."⁷ The change, however, created a conflict between the Keswick teachers and members of the Holiness Movement, many of whom continued with their original teachings.

Edward Irving, along with others, also led the way in the teaching of the restoration of the church. Synan states:

This popular Presbyterian pastor led the first attempt at Charismatic Renewal in his Regent Square Presbyterian Church in 1831 and later formed the Catholic Apostolic Church. Although tongues and prophecies were experienced in his church, Irving was not successful in his quest for restoration of New Testament Christianity.⁸

⁷ Synan, *Century of the Holy Spirit*, 29.

⁸ Synan, *Century of the Holy Spirit*, 2.

Irving's exposure to and belief in speaking in tongues later worked against him because when members of his church spoke in tongues, the leaders asked him to stop it, but he refused. "In time the Presbytery of London preferred charges against Irving, tried, and convicted him of allowing women to speak in church and also for heresy concerning some of his teachings on the person of Christ. Many felt the charges were trumped-up and the trial unfair."⁹ The work and manifestations of the Holy Spirit, however, could not be stopped, and the pending further outpouring which was imminent could not be hindered.

Early in the nineteenth century, greater emphasis was being placed on the Pentecostal expression beyond "second blessing," which referred to sanctification. "After the war, however, there was a growing tendency to speak of the second work of grace as the Baptism of the Holy Ghost."¹⁰ This was all a part of the preparation for last-days Pentecostalism, which would be built partly on the foundation of Wesleyan holiness. Land notes that "had there been no eighteenth-century Wesleyan and nineteenth-century Holiness Movements, there would have been no twentieth-century Pentecostalism, and Pentecostalism is at any rate inexplicable without this theological heritage."¹¹ While the foundation was being laid over a period of time, the components of the Pentecostal movement were coming together and preparing to be revealed in the Americas in a special way.

⁹ Synan, *Century of the Holy Spirit*, 24.

¹⁰ Synan, *Century of the Holy Spirit*, 26.

¹¹ Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality*, 39.

Just before the turn of the century, however, a new day began to dawn. This was to be a pivotal development period leading to an explosion in the Pentecostal movement. In the late nineteenth century another group of men, including R. G. Spurling and his son Richard, were at odds with their Baptist polity and were barred from their local church. While initially they had no intention of forming a church, in 1886 they formed the Christian Union. In 1896, after a great revival and much persecution including the burning down of their house, they were forced to worship in the home of another Baptist, Deacon W. F. Bryant. By 1902 they organized themselves into a church called the Holiness Church at Camp Creek. In 1903, A. J. (Ambrose Jessup) Tomlinson, a man with great organizational skills, joined the church and was asked to be the pastor. By 1906, this group held its first General Assembly in North Carolina with Tomlinson as secretary and moderator. Persons in attendance came from Tennessee, Georgia, and North Carolina. One of the decisions made at this first General Assembly was “we do not consider ourselves a legislative or executive body but judicial only.”¹²

At this time Tomlinson himself was not baptized with the Holy Spirit, and it was not until the following year that he, under the preaching of G. B. Cashwell, who was an attendee at Azusa Street, received the baptism and spoke in tongues.

The Welsh Revival of 1904 was another of the indicators around the world that God, who is no respecter of persons, was preparing the hearts of his people in every level of society, and in nations around the world, for something great. “This revival first

¹² *Book of Minutes: Church of God* (Cleveland, TN: Church of God Publishing House, 1922), 15.

set all Wales ablaze, then London and then, all of England, until people from all over the world were coming to see if this was the new Pentecost.”¹³

Pentecost Comes to America

The early twentieth century experienced what can only be described as an explosion of the outpouring of the Spirit of God, or the baptism of the Holy Spirit. After years of second blessing, baptism of the Holy Spirit, and speaking in tongues in various parts of the world that were mainly contained to those areas, the catalyst for a global impact was now ready to penetrate the spiritual arena and launch one of the greatest periods of growth and empowerment of Christian development. Charles Fox Parham, who was born in Muscatine, Iowa, in 1873, seems to have entered the world with all of the circumstances needed for the miraculous to occur in his life.

The man who is generally recognized as the formulator of Pentecostal doctrine and the theological founder of the Movement was Charles Fox Parham (1873–1929). His doctrine of tongues as the “Bible evidence of baptism in the Holy Spirit” would directly lead to the Azusa Street Revival of 1906 and the creation of the World Pentecostal Movement.¹⁴

Experiencing the death of his mother while he was barely a teenager created a crisis in Parham’s life, but it was this experience which led him to accept Jesus Christ as his Savior. Believing that he had a call to ministry even before his conversion, he still pursued a career in medicine and then became very ill. However, believing that he was being punished for not following the call from God, he turned to the Bible, studying the

¹³ Synan, *Century of the Holy Spirit*, 41.

¹⁴ Synan, *Century of the Holy Spirit*, 42.

healing miracles of Jesus, and he was healed. Parham then returned to secular school to receive a formal education, but while pursuing this he received a revelation that this kind of education was not necessary for him to fulfill his mission. Therefore he continued his ministry with teaching and healing missions. Several of the missions started by Parham were not very successful, but he grew, persisted, and finally settled in Topeka, Kansas, where he organized the Bethel Bible School. It was at this school that greater manifestations began to take place. Goff states, "It was Parham alone who formulated the distinguishing ideological formula of tongues as the initial evidence for Holy Spirit baptism, that discovery, in effect, created the Pentecostal Movement."¹⁵

Parham's small school of about twenty-five students had two extraordinary students as part of the body. First there was Agnes Ozman, who was saved and had attended several Bible schools before, but the experience she had at Bethel was like no other. She had an intense hunger for the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and after several days of prayer, fasting, and the study of the Word, she asked Parham to pray for her that she might receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking with other tongues. Parham writes,

I laid my hands upon her and prayed. I had scarcely repeated three dozen sentences when a glory fell upon her, a halo seemed to surround her head and face and she began speaking the Chinese language and was unable to speak English for three days. When she tried to write in English to tell us of her experience she wrote in Chinese, copies of which we still have, in newspapers printed at that time.¹⁶

¹⁵ James R. Goff Jr., *Fields White Unto Harvest: Charles F. Parham and the Missionary Origins of Pentecostalism* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 1988), 164.

¹⁶ Charles F. Parham, as quoted in Synan, *Century of the Holy Spirit*, 44.

The second extraordinary student of Parham's school was "the son of former slaves from Centerville, Louisiana. He taught himself to read and write."¹⁷ This student was William J. Seymour, who was born to Simon and Phillis Seymour in 1870. "Seymour was allowed only to listen outside the classroom through the half open door. Nevertheless, Seymour accepted Parham's doctrine of the baptism of the Spirit and began to teach it in a Holiness Church in Los Angeles."¹⁸

William's young adult life took him from Louisiana to Indianapolis and from there to Cincinnati, Ohio. In both places, he found intense racism as well as persons who supported interracial worship. "When Seymour migrated north to Indianapolis around 1896, he found that black people were given equal protection as citizens, the right to vote and the right to hold public office."¹⁹

It was in Indianapolis where Seymour claimed salvation and started his spiritual journey. The authors noted that while some believed that Seymour left the Methodist Church for theological reasons, Douglas Nelson believed that it was because of racial prejudice. "Racial prejudice was not restricted to the South. By 1900, racial feelings in Indiana had shifted to the point that there was little communication between blacks and whites. Despite constitutional guarantees, the earlier optimism that blacks had embraced quickly dissipated as they encountered discrimination (augmented by mob violence) and increased episodes of black lynching."²⁰

¹⁷ Walter J. Hollenweger, *Pentecostalism: Origins and Developments Worldwide* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1997), 19.

¹⁸ Hollenweger, *Pentecostalism*, 19.

¹⁹ Vinson Synan and Charles R. Fox Jr., *William J. Seymour: Pioneer of the Azusa Street Revival* (Alachua, FL: Bridge Logos, 2012), 29.

²⁰ Synan and Fox, *William J. Seymour*, 31.

Seymour's journey continued to Houston, and it was from here that he was invited to Los Angeles to pastor the Holiness Church; a fresh wind began to blow in his ministry and in the city. Seymour's tenure at this church, however, did not last long as Julia Hutchinson, the co-pastor, disagreed with Seymour's teaching on speaking in tongues. "By the next Sunday Seymour found himself locked out of the church he had travelled halfway across the nation to serve."²¹ Although this action was controversial and hostile to Seymour, it opened the door for the history-making events which eventually took place at Azusa Street. Seymour was rejected by the co-pastor, but a reasonable number of persons accepted his teaching and followed his ministry to his other locations—Owen Lee's house and Bonnie Brae Street—all of which proved to be too small for the crowds that attended the meetings.

Finally, Seymour found a building which was originally an African Methodist Episcopal Church but was abandoned and had become a warehouse. This building became the center for the life-transforming work of the Holy Spirit in people of all races and economic status from around the world. For William Joseph Seymour, to be denied the opportunity to serve as pastor and a place from which to do so was by no means a deterrent for this fired-up Pentecostal preacher. He was like the prophet Jeremiah, who stated, "I will not make mention of him, nor speak anymore in his name. But his word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones and I was weary with forbearing and I could not stay."²² Therefore, from the Holiness Church pastored by Julia Hutchison

²¹ Jack W. Hayford and S. David Moore, *The Charismatic Century: The Enduring Impact of the Azusa Street Revival* (New York: Warner Faith, 2006), 159-60.

²² Jeremiah 20:9.

to the house where he was a guest, he went with a passion. “Locked out of his church and nearly penniless, elder Seymour was a man with a message burning in his bones. Feeling compelled to carry on despite the reversal at the Santa Fe Holiness Mission, Seymour first began teaching those that followed him at the house of Owen ‘Irish’ Lee, where he initially stayed.”²³ The Lord was using him, and therefore, more and more people kept attending and being blessed. Soon, all of the places became too small for the meetings, including the home of Richard and Ruth Asberry on Bonnie Brae Street. However small the meeting house was, or regardless of the location, it did not stop miracles from taking place. Seymour embraced every opportunity to minister to people, and while visiting with his friend Mr. Lee, “Lee then asked Seymour to pray for him to receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit. They prayed together, and Lee began speaking in other tongues as he received the baptism. This was the first occasion of anyone receiving the baptism of the Holy Spirit when elder Seymour prayed for them.”²⁴

This was only the beginning of great things to follow, because as Seymour gave the account of what had just happened at Owen Lee’s house, he and seven others who were present began speaking in tongues. April 1906 became a most notable and historic day as miracles were not just of persons speaking in tongues but also of persons being instantly bestowed with gifts never demonstrated before.

One of the seven recipients of the baptism earlier in the evening was Jenny Moore who would one day become Seymour’s wife. She began to play beautiful music on an old upright piano, and to sing in what people said was Hebrew. Up

²³ Synan, *Century of the Holy Spirit*, 47.

²⁴ Synan, *Century of the Holy Spirit*, 48.

until this time, she had never played the piano and although she never took a lesson, she was able to play the instrument for the rest of her life.²⁵

Persons began associating with the Apostolic Faith Mission, individually as well as by whole churches, as in the case of the Peniel Mission and many others. As the number of congregants grew, so also did the criticisms. A *Los Angeles Times* reporter on April 18, 1906, described the worshippers as “breathing strange utterances and mouthing a creed which it would seem no sane mortal could understand.”²⁶ In describing the intensity of the services at Azusa Street, Synan states, “There were as many as nine services per day, starting early in the morning and running late into the night. For weeks on end the meetings would blend into one another and last twenty-four hours a day. The building was always open, and the meetings started themselves without a leader to initiate them.”²⁷

Opposition and Challenges

Many ministers discouraged their members from visiting the mission, while other ministers went as far as calling the police to shut the meetings down. Leaders from two large churches were aggressive in their opposition to the service being held in Azusa Street. “Phineas Bresee of the Pentecostal Church of the Nazarene came out strongly against the ‘Tongues Movement.’ Apparently without visiting or investigating the Azusa Street Mission himself, he declared it to be a false revival and told his people

²⁵ Synan, *Century of the Holy Spirit*, 49.

²⁶ Synan, *Century of the Holy Spirit*, 52.

²⁷ Synan, *Century of the Holy Spirit*, 56.

to remain separate.”²⁸ He continued, noting that “Bishop Alma White accused the Azusa Street Revival of worshipping the devil while promoting and practicing witchcraft and sexual immorality.”²⁹ Many of the religious publications of that time produced by the Holiness movement also condemned the Azusa Street Revival. Synan notes, “Many of the Holiness Periodicals were quick to caution people that this could be a satanic counterfeit of what they were looking for and within a short time began to say that the ‘Tongues Movement’ was of the devil.”³⁰ The environment in which Azusa Street had to operate was so hostile that it is hard to imagine how they survived the onslaught of the attacks. “One holiness leader went as far as to call it the ‘last vomit of Satan.’”³¹

John MacArthur refers to the phenomenon of speaking in tongues as mocking the Spirit. He points out that if Scripture alone was truly the final authority, then unbiblical practices should not be tolerated, such as “mumbling in nonsensical prayer languages, uttering fallible prophecies, worshipping in disorderly ways, or being knocked senseless by the supposed power of the Holy Spirit.”³² He concludes, “It is deeply ironic that the movement most concerned with emphasizing the Holy Spirit is, in fact the one that treats Him with the greatest contempt and condescension.”³³

It is noted, however, that many of these criticisms and much eventual persecution of members continued because the Azusa Street Revival was affecting the structure and attendance at the established churches, breaking down social, racial,

²⁸ Synan, *Century of the Holy Spirit*, 55.

²⁹ Synan, *Century of the Holy Spirit*, 54.

³⁰ Synan, *Century of the Holy Spirit*, 54.

³¹ Synan, *Century of the Holy Spirit*, 54.

³² John MacArthur, *Strange Fire: The Danger of Offending the Holy Spirit with Counterfeit Worship* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2013), 16.

³³ MacArthur, *Strange Fire*, 18.

religious, and economic lines as well as introducing a form of worship never experienced before. However, these persons who have been introduced and transformed by the Azusa Street Revival were like the apostle Paul, who, after knowing what was ahead of him in Jerusalem, declared, “but none of these things moved me.”³⁴

The Azusa Street Revival had its share of other challenges, which led to its two peak periods of 1906 to 1909 and 1911 to 1912. The mission eventually operated as a regular church after 1912 for several reasons, including

1. the prideful attitude of those who attended;
2. intense racial issues;
3. the jealous perceptions of Florence Crawford and Clara Lum (the latter is believed to have been disappointed that Seymour did not marry her);
4. Seymour’s constant travel as an itinerant speaker;
5. cessation of media coverage; and
6. differences of opinion between persons from different races and religious backgrounds.

However, from among those who heard of or visited Azusa Street came another great spinoff that affected the wider Pentecostal movement around the world. From this nondenominational revival, new denominations began to spring up across North America.

The first of these, Charles H. Mason, founder of the Church of God in Christ, came to Azusa Street for an extended visit in 1907. Upon returning to his headquarters in Memphis, he and the message of Pentecost were rejected by the majority of the Church. This led to a split in the church in 1907 when Mason

³⁴ Acts 20:24.

and those who agreed with him reorganized the Church of God in Christ as a Pentecostal Denomination. As the only early convert to Pentecostalism who came from a legally incorporated church, Bishop Mason played a vital part in the spread of the movement and its message.³⁵

G. B. Cashwell was another pioneer, and Hayford notes, “More than any other single leader, Cashwell, the ‘Pentecostal apostle to the South,’ introduced the radical holiness churches in Dixie to the Azusa Street Revival and its message of Spirit fullness and speaking with tongues.”³⁶ He visited Azusa Street and was at first apprehensive about the message and loudness of the service. “Subsequently, he was convicted of his sin, repented and received the baptism of the Holy Spirit when several young African-American boys prayed for him.”³⁷ Upon his return to his base in Dunn, North Carolina, he started a series of revival services which had a great effect on the South. “It was through this spinoff of the Azusa Street revival in North Carolina that the Fire Baptized Holiness Church, the Pentecostal Holiness Church and a substantial wing of the Freewill Baptist Church (which later organized as the Pentecostal Freewill Church) were swept into the ranks of the Pentecostal Movement.”³⁸ Other churches also were affected and became a part of the Pentecostal Movement through preaching influenced by Azusa Street. These included “Church of God (Cleveland Tennessee), the Church of God (Mountain Assembly), and the Pentecostal Assembly of the Mississippi Valley. Several individual Methodist, Baptist and Presbyterian churches accepted the Azusa Street

³⁵ Synan, *Century of the Holy Spirit*, 65.

³⁶ Hayford and Moore, *Charismatic Century*, 115.

³⁷ Synan, *Century of the Holy Spirit*, 66.

³⁸ Synan, *Century of the Holy Spirit*, 66.

message, left their previous affiliations and joined the newly forming Pentecostal Denominations.”³⁹

The Pentecostal message of Azusa Street was not confined to North America but also found its way to the Bahamas through one of the denominations which became a part of the Pentecostal movement through the preaching of Cashwell. Synan notes, “Even the little-known Camp Meeting at Pleasant Grove, Florida, had an impact well beyond the tabernacle building. Baptized in the Holy Spirit, the Bahamians, Edmund and Rebecca Barr returned home to preach the Pentecostal message.”⁴⁰

Pentecostalism came to the Bahamas at a time when many persons from the traditional denominations were not tolerant of news of this new movement. From what we were told by our forebears, some persons were afraid to associate with those who claimed to have been baptized with the Holy Spirit and were speaking with other tongues. Like on the day of Pentecost, those who were converted to this Pentecostal movement were considered to have lost their minds or be possessed by evil spirits. Many families were torn apart as many children (young adults) were put out of their homes when parents learned of their association with this new movement and had to live with other family members or strangers who supported the movement. Bishop Herman E. Dean, who was born on Long Island in the Bahamas and was converted as a teenager before moving to Florida where he served as a pastor and district overseer for the Church of God of Prophecy, for many years was one among many persons who had such an experience. After his conversion on a boat, when he returned to his home on

³⁹ Synan, *Century of the Holy Spirit*, 66.

⁴⁰ Synan, *Century of the Holy Spirit*, 74.

Long Island several months later and began to preach and worship in this new way, many persons. especially his father, William, who was a local law enforcement officer, became very concerned about his new lifestyle which involved preaching, shouting, and speaking in tongues.

He didn't want that spirit in his life or anywhere around him for that matter. He wasn't willing to take any chance, as Herman still lived at home, so he packed Herman's clothes and told him to leave and that he was no longer welcomed in his house. William then went on to warn the Anglican priest and everyone in the community not to allow Herman in their homes and if they did he would not hesitate to arrest them.⁴¹

According to Dean and Brown, Herman had no place to live, so he lived in the woods for some time until he constructed a hut. The persecution was great; however, this did not stop the movement. Instead, it continued to grow as Pentecostal missionaries traveled across the islands of the Bahamas preaching the good news of Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit.

On his first visit to the Bahamas, A. J. Tomlinson and his team visited and preached on New Providence, Exuma, Ragged Island, and Long Island. While his experience was unique on each island, the following are two interesting entries made in his dairy about Long Island.

April 14, 1911: Yesterday morning we bid Deadmans Cay adieu and took boat for the Bight on Long Island. When we took the boat some of the people who had been so blest (sic) at Clarencetown (sic) with others were on the shore to say goodbye (sic) they cried like babies. It seemed they could hardly stand it for us to

⁴¹ Kevan N. Dean and Terry L. Brown, *Ezekiel: Yuma's Native Son*, (Bloomington, IN: AuthorHouse, 2011), 44.

leave them with the thought that we would never see them again after God had made us such a blessing to them.⁴²

April 17, 1911: We have held six services at Simses (sic) since we came and every one very impressive. All outdoors in the sunshine in the day time and moonlight at night. The last service held tonight was very impressive. At the close of the discourse nearly all said they wanted the baptism with the Holy Ghost and kneeled down on the ground several deep around the drum. Tears and sobs were seen and heard and the Spirit was at work.⁴³

Not only was there opposition to Pentecostalism in the beginning; even today, Pentecostals are still faced with opposition. MacArthur, one of the critics of Pentecostalism, after a lengthy discourse relative to the gift of speaking in tongues, says,

In short, the glossolalia practiced by today's Charismatic is a counterfeit that by every measure falls short of the gift of tongues described in the New Testament. Today's tongues-speakers claim to have received the biblical gift, but ultimately, they have to acknowledge that the gibberish they are speaking has none of the characteristics of real language. Whereas modern "tongues" is a learned behavior consisting of unintelligible stammering and nonsense syllables, the New Testament gift involved the supernatural ability to speak precisely in a foreign language the speaker had never learned. Though charismatics may hijack biblical terminology to describe their practice, the fact remains that such fabricated behavior has no relation to the biblical gift.⁴⁴

The Charismatic Movement in America and the Bahamas

In *The Charismatic Century*, Hayford makes mention of a transition that was taking place in the Pentecostal movement which referred to the movement having wider acceptance in the world, especially in the religious community. He writes,

⁴² Lillie Duggar, *A. J. Tomlinson: Former General Overseer of the Church of God* (Cleveland, TN: White Wing Publishing House, 1969), 125.

⁴³ Duggar, *A. J. Tomlinson*, 126.

⁴⁴ MacArthur, *Strange Fire*, 137.

From the 1920s until after the second world war, Pentecostals in America were in a time of transition and consolidation. It was a time of self-definition and yearning for broader acceptance. Like other radical Christian groups of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Pentecostals were beginning the gradual journey to moderation so characteristic of groups whose origin are on the fringes of society. It was not an easy trek.⁴⁵

The roots of the charismatic movement are acknowledged to have developed out of the Pentecostal movement of 1907, “whose rapid expansion has been mainly since 1950.”⁴⁶ In concurrence, Synan notes, however,

Before 1960, several mainline pastors entered into the tongue experience and suffered various reactions from their church leaders. Among these were Harold Bradesen (Lutheran and later, Dutch Reformed), Richard Winkler (Episcopal), Tommy Tyson (Methodist), and Gerald Derstine (Mennonite). Like many others before him, Derstine was expelled (“silence”) from the Mennonite ministry, while Tyson and Winkler were subjected to ecclesiastical investigations before being allowed to stay in the ministry.⁴⁷

Hayford describes the development of the charismatic movement in this way:

“The Charismatic Renewal of the 1960s and 1970s caught the whole church by surprise. The Holy Spirit’s sovereign workings among mainline Protestant churches and Catholics, which thereby leaped over the walls erected between Pentecostals and all other Christian churches, was an unpredictable breakthrough.”⁴⁸ After World War II, rapid changes began to take place as Pentecostals began to prosper and moved up the socioeconomic ladder of society. The tent meetings and popular evangelists like William Branham and Oral Roberts were visited by thousands of persons in search of salvation

⁴⁵ Hayford and Moore, *Charismatic Century*, 159-60.

⁴⁶ Burgess and van der Maas, eds., *New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, 291.

⁴⁷ Synan, *Century of the Holy Spirit*, 150.

⁴⁸ Hayford and Moore, *Charismatic Century*, 212.

and healing. The dramatic moment when the charismatic movement exploded onto the world's scene took place in St. Mark's Episcopal Church in Van Nuys, California, when its rector announced that he had been baptized with the Holy Spirit and now spoke in tongues. Synan notes, "April 1960, Bennett shared his experience with the members of his wealthy parish. What followed was almost a riot of rejection."⁴⁹ He further noted that while Bennett eventually resigned the pastorate, many members of his parish were baptized in the Holy Spirit. Approximately seven years after the Episcopal Church, through Bennett and others, received their blessings of Pentecost, the Roman Catholic Church had its major encounter with the Holy Spirit. "Saturday, February 18, 1967, was another Day of Pentecost. It was by God's choice, a historic day for the Roman Catholic Church. That evening, the Holy Spirit fell upon a group of Roman Catholics at a retreat house just north of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania."⁵⁰

What is also significant about this historic event is that "this is the first time in Christian history that a movement of Protestant Provenance had not only entered the Catholic Church, but had also been received and accepted by church authorities."⁵¹ In essence, the Catholic charismatic movement has helped the Catholic Church around the world with its growth and has helped members of the church to be more open to other Christians. As stated by Synan, "the Charismatic Renewal was the first grass-root movement to span virtually all the Christian Churches and traditions."⁵²

⁴⁹ Synan, *Century of the Holy Spirit*, 153.

⁵⁰ Synan, *Century of the Holy Spirit*, 209.

⁵¹ Synan, *Century of the Holy Spirit*, 211.

⁵² Synan, *Century of the Holy Spirit*, 231.

The historical record shows that from 1960 onwards, the charismatic movement was to infiltrate all of the mainline churches. Despite having challenges due to persons associated with the movement, it survived. First, there was “the very public sex scandal associated with religious broadcaster, Jim Baker and his PTL network brought ridicule to Charismatics.”⁵³ Within the same decade, the charismatic movement was again burdened “by the downfall of Pentecostal evangelist, Jimmy Swaggard with another sex scandal, very much in the news, that further damaged the image of the Pentecostals and Charismatics in the public eye.”⁵⁴ These embarrassing events were coupled with other controversies developed by others.

Known by some as the “name it and claim it” group, those espousing the “word of faith teaching” taught that determined faith was necessary to receive God’s promises. These teaching emphasized the importance of confessing Scripture promises and holding to that confession—hence the term, positive confession—no matter what contrary evidence or circumstances one might face.⁵⁵

Major proponents of this teaching included Kenneth Copeland, Kenneth Hagan, and Fredrick Price. Further, there was the matter of poor judgment used by Oral Roberts in 1987, when he made the declaration that “God would take him home if he failed to raise enough money to keep ORU’s City of Faith open.”⁵⁶

Until the 1960s, only Pentecostal churches in the Bahamas used drum sets, tambourines, hand cymbals, and guitars in their worship services. They were considered too noisy and out of order by the other churches. Further, no one was allowed to shout

⁵³ Hayford and Moore, *Charismatic Century*, 244.

⁵⁴ Hayford and Moore, *Charismatic Century*, 244.

⁵⁵ Hayford and Moore, *Charismatic Century*, 243.

⁵⁶ Hayford and Moore, *Charismatic Century*, 244.

a loud praise in the services or cry out in a loud way under the influence of the Spirit or they would be physically removed from the building. Hand clapping, feet stomping, or spontaneous singing were not allowed in services. Many were so opposed to the Pentecostal style of worship that they disallowed intermarriages between persons who were Pentecostals and other denominations; they even refused to attend Pentecostal churches, except for funerals. However, this began to change in the 1940s and 1950s when many Bahamian men and women were engaged in what was called the “Contract.” The United States government solicited men and women as farm workers to pick fruits and vegetables because many of their male citizens were involved in the world wars.⁵⁷ When these contract workers of all denominations were exposed mainly to the Pentecostalism movement in the United States, where they were uninhibited by family and friends, they became a part of the movement and returned to the Bahamas as Pentecostal Christians. Some could not take their newfound religious freedom back to their church because it was not welcomed there. Others were not comfortable with their old style of worship so they never went back to their former churches, while others were put out of their original church when they tried to freely worship in this new form. Therefore, as a result,

1. some persons started their own independent Pentecostal church;
2. some joined existing Pentecostal churches;
3. others stayed in their original church and introduced gradual reform.

⁵⁷ Joseph M. Swann and Cephas Ferguson (oral history from parents and other relatives).

A second factor that started to influence people was radio broadcasts of charismatic ministers like Oral Roberts, Jimmy Swaggart, and others who at that time greatly influenced the spiritual lives of many people in America. These broadcasts were heard in the Bahamas through radio stations in South Florida, and therefore people began to think differently and adopt the new form of worship.

A third factor that had an effect on the mindset of the people was that the Pentecostal movement in the Bahamas began to grow numerically and spiritually, as well as educationally, socially, and economically. Hollenweger describes the rise of the socioeconomic status of Pentecostals as “movements of social transformation.”⁵⁸ He quotes Luther P. Gerlach as saying, “people with a higher education are attaining the Pentecostal experience of baptism in the Spirit more readily than students with an inferior education.”⁵⁹ There was a desire by many to improve their worship experience on Sundays from one that was cold and meaningless to one that exemplified a true relationship with God.

Fourth, a major event that opened the door for transition from classical Pentecostalism to charismatic Pentecostalism in the Bahamas took place in 1968. This political event was the change of government from one that was a minority rule to one that was a majority rule. The new government’s focus was on education, and because of this, not only did they begin to build a number of high schools but also they provided millions of dollars in scholarships for Bahamians to earn undergraduate and postgraduate degrees in universities in the United States.

⁵⁸ Hollenweger, *Pentecostalism*, 34.

⁵⁹ Hollenweger, *Pentecostalism*, 35.

This was a crucial time in the United States because the charismatic movement was spreading and the 1960s and 1970s were times of change. Many who left home with a spiritual experience, as well as those who did not, were drawn to the Pentecostal way of worship and found a great attraction to it through the charismatic movement. A number of individuals returned home and in a few years either influenced their local church to become more charismatic in its worship experience and belief or started their own ministry through small home Bible study groups which developed into full churches with hundreds and even thousands of members.⁶⁰ Referring to their early beginnings, Bahamas Faith Ministries International in their twentieth anniversary commemorative book writes,

Within six (6) months we had to find another facility to house the large crowd of more than forty (40) persons so we moved to Bay Street in the Central Furniture Building Storefront Complex. We were forced to use every inch of space for activities, and within six months we had grown to more than 100 members. And of course, we were plagued with parking problems.⁶¹

The mid 1970s and early 1980s were years when the seeds which were planted in the hearts of many young persons while in the United States, as well as older persons who had some outside exposure, began to spring up and gather the attention of those around them. They were bold, determined, and radical in their approach but were generally focused on serving God in a nontraditional way. First, they did not worship in “church buildings” as was traditional in the Bahamas. Second, they did not meet initially on Sundays, and third, they sang contemporary songs and had an unusual way to stress

⁶⁰ Personal knowledge and interfaith relationships with Myles Munroe.

⁶¹ Lucile Richardson, *20th Anniversary Commemorative Book of Bahamas Faith Ministries International* (Nassau, the Bahamas: The Diplomat Press 2000), 47.

offerings. Most of these new groups in their initial development met with strong opposition and criticism from other religious bodies, especially Pentecostals, as it was felt that they were creating a bad name for the movement because of their nontraditional approach. In referring to this point Richardson writes, “We were looked upon with great suspicion and were considered a cult. We also avoided meetings on Sunday and Friday nights because most services were held on those days so we met on Saturday evenings.”⁶²

This response was not unique to the Bahamas, because when the charismatic movement began in the United States, similar reactions were manifested. Hayford notes, “The Assemblies of God issued a formal ‘white paper’ (an authoritative report) against the Charismatic Movement in 1969, reflecting the feelings of many Pentecostal groups as well. But it is to their credit that not long afterwards they withdrew the statement and embraced the revival—as did the majority of Pentecostals.”⁶³

Dr. Myles Munroe, an Oral Roberts University graduate and young Bahamian visionary, was the founder and senior director with three assistants when the Bahamas Faith Ministries International was founded. His ministry stretched around the world to reach people of every social stratus, including presidents, kings, governors, and members of Parliament. Roberts, in a letter of encouragement to Dr. Munroe in June 2000, writes,

Of the more than 17,000 graduates of Oral Roberts University, Myles Munroe is one of the top leaders to go forth into every man’s world. Myles has a heart to bring purpose, God’s purpose, to every man. His outreach is global, probably the

⁶² Richardson, *20th Anniversary Commemorative Book*, 47.

⁶³ Hayford and Moore, *Charismatic Century*, 213.

strongest voice for the Third World ministers to whom he brings God's life changing message to thousands of Third World ministries each year. In my view, Myles stands as one of the top ten graduates of ORU. He is brilliant in intellect, deeply spiritual and anointed in spirit, most personable in his appearance and with a stirring passion to lift the entire Body of Christ to its last day mission.⁶⁴

This ministry, which has a membership of more than two thousand people, serves as a covering for hundreds of churches around the world, many of whom attend at least two major conferences in the Bahamas each year. Myles Munroe died in a tragic plane crash on November 9, 2014, in Freeport, Grand Bahama. The ministry is now headed by one of his original assistants, Dave Burrows.

Other churches and ministries that have transitioned to the dynamic charismatic style of worship include:

The Mount Tabor Baptist Church, which was birthed from a Baptist association and started with fewer than fifty members. Because of their adoption of a charismatic/Pentecostal style of worship headed by a leader with a charismatic personality and ministry, they now claim a membership of more than four thousand. Bishop Neil C. Ellis, who formerly held the position of vice president of the Full Gospel Baptist Association in the United States has now become the presiding bishop of more than three hundred churches in the Caribbean, Canada, and the United States under the umbrella of the Global United Fellowship. His radio and television ministry is seen and heard on a number of religious television networks around the world.⁶⁵

⁶⁴ Richardson, *20th Anniversary Commemorative Book*, 25.

⁶⁵ Personal knowledge and interfaith relationship with Neil C. Ellis.

Holy Trinity Episcopal Church as a member of the Anglican community in the Bahamas became a singular unit that embraced the charismatic movement and conducted at least one service on Sundays which was totally charismatic in nature. When these services were introduced by the Venerable Right Reverend E. E. Etienne Bowleg in the early 1990s, it took many by surprise knowing the European tradition of the Anglican Church in the Bahamas. However, this service became a source of inspiration to the young and to many of the older members of community. The 9:00 a.m. charismatic service utilizes drums, tambourine, guitars, praise dancers, and praise teams with the incorporation of contemporary songs. The 11:00 a.m. service was a model of the traditional style of worship of the European Church.⁶⁶

The Bahamas Harvest Church is a local congregation headed by Pastor Mario Moxey, a graduate of Rod Parsley's World Harvest Bible College, which started ministry over the decade and a half and now has a following of several hundred members. This group of young members came out of several churches, not necessarily Pentecostals, where they felt that their spiritual need was not being met by the traditional churches and where their opportunity for ministry was limited.⁶⁷

⁶⁶ Personal knowledge.

⁶⁷ Personal knowledge and interfaith relationship with Mario Moxey.

Conclusion

The Pentecostal and charismatic movements have experienced many ups and downs in ministry due to acceptance and/or objections from various persons for a diversity of reasons. A major portion of the challenges came from persons who rejected the concept of Pentecostalism, especially speaking in tongues. However, a significant portion of the conflicts also came through persons who were a part of the movement, who, due to their desire for leadership positions or to impose their personal beliefs, tried to influence negatively the movement. The worst part of the upheavals in the movement came because of persons who had moral failures or demonstrated personal financial greed. As a result, there were many instances of fellow workers in the movement at the leadership and regular membership levels who parted ways. Through research questions, it is hoped to discover to what extent this same scenario has or has not happened in the Bahamas.

CHAPTER THREE

BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES

Introduction

Differences of opinion and methodology, inclination toward a particular process, and even varied interpretations of Scripture and application are not new phenomena. These all have been with the human race from the beginning of time. As far back as recorded history, man has been in disagreement with other people and even with his creator. The variations which have occurred led to the development of a plethora of religions, philosophies, and social processes, and many subsets within the religious community. As a result, Christianity and denominations within Christianity have exploded in growth, many of which seem to be competing among themselves for members from the same pool of persons.

Because the Godhead of Christianity is described as the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, the function of each part of the Godhead, individually or as a single unit, has been one of the ongoing discussions among Christians. The work of the Spirit of God has been detailed throughout the Old and New Testaments. However, the manner in which the Spirit of God, which is described as “the promise of the Father,”¹ should make known his presence has been a discussion, which has created distinctions between many Christian beliefs and particularly those who are described as Pentecostals.

¹ Acts 1:4. Unless otherwise noted, all biblical quotations are from the King James Version.

This group of Christians has been divided into several subsets, including classical Pentecostals and charismatic Pentecostals, neo-Pentecostals, and several others, all with their own interpretation of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. The following is therefore an attempt to outline, in part, what the Scripture says about the working of the Spirit of God in the Old and New Testaments.

The Spirit of God in the Old Testament

The first chapter of Genesis and the first chapter of the Gospel of John clearly outline the triune nature of the Godhead as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. They were all together before time began, and during creation they all played their part: “And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.”² Then, God the Father spoke: “Let there be light; and there was light.”³ God the Son, the Word who was made flesh (John 1), agreed with the others. Later, after creating everything else, God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.”⁴

Unlike what was done according to prophecy in the New Testament, the “Spirit of the Lord” in the Old Testament worked in a different way; in most cases we find that on special occasions, “the Spirit of the Lord” came upon individuals for a period and then departed. However, in the New Testament, the Spirit of the Lord was to remain as

² Genesis 1:2.

³ Genesis 1:3.

⁴ Genesis 1:26.

a comforter or paraclete, to manifest all of the fruits that he produces and to speak whenever he gives an utterance.

When the Spirit of the Lord comes upon individuals , they are always empowered to do something. The elders were empowered to support the heavy workload of Moses. “And the Lord came down in a cloud and spoke unto him, and took the Spirit that was upon him, and gave it unto the seventy elders: and it came to pass, that, when the Spirit rested upon them, they prophesied and did not cease.”⁵

In the book of Judges, we read how Othniel was used by God to deliver Israel from their enemies. “And the Spirit of the Lord came upon him and he judged Israel and went out to war: and the Lord delivered Chushanrishathaim of Mesopotamia into his hands; and his hands prevailed against Chushanrishathaim.”⁶ According to the Life Application Bible, “The phrase ‘the Spirit of the Lord came upon him’ was also spoken of the judges Gideon, Jephthah, and Samson, among others. The phrase expresses a temporary and spontaneous increase of physical, spiritual, and mental strength. This was an extraordinary and supernatural occurrence to prepare a person for a special task at hand.”⁷

God anointed Gideon, another servant to deliver Israel from the hands of their enemies, with his Spirit. “But the Spirit of the Lord came upon Gideon, and he blew a trumpet; and Abiezer was gathered after him.”⁸ This is another example of God

⁵ Numbers 11:25.

⁶ Judges 3:10.

⁷ *Life Application Study Bible* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House, 2007), 345.

⁸ Judges 6:34.

preparing an individual in an unusual manner by anointing him with the Spirit. In all cases, the individuals were empowered to do what they could not have ordinarily done.

The Old Testament also records how Samson on numerous occasions was uniquely empowered by the Spirit of God to do unusual and powerful things.

Then went Samson down, and his father and his mother, to Timnath, and came to the vineyards of Timnath: and, behold, a young lion roared against him. And the Spirit of the LORD came mightily upon him, and he rent him as he would have rent a kid, and he had nothing in his hand: but he told not his father or his mother what he had done.⁹

The book of Judges also tells of another individual being anointed by the Spirit of the Lord to do an unusual work, but he did not respond with humility; rather, he allowed the flesh to take control and thereby made a bad decision.

Then the Spirit of the LORD came upon Jephthah, and he passed over Gilead, and Manasseh, and passed over Mizpah of Gilead, and from Mizpah of Gilead he passed over unto the children of Ammon. And Jephthah vowed a vow unto the LORD, and said, If thou shalt without fail deliver the children of Ammon into mine hands, then it shall be, that whatsoever cometh forth of the doors of my house to meet me, when I return in peace from the children of Ammon, shall surely be the LORD's, and I will offer it up for a burnt offering.¹⁰

This vow, made without a thought, resulted in Jephthah sacrificing his only child. This rash vow was painful not only for his family but also for the women of Israel. This situation caused them to institute an annual four days of lamenting in memory of this act.

There are incidents in which the Holy Spirit of God would empower individuals (believers and unbelievers), sometimes temporarily, to do unusual tasks. Examples of

⁹ Judges 14:5-6.

¹⁰ Judges 11:29-31.

this can be seen in the case of Saul. “And the Spirit of the Lord will come upon thee, and thou shall prophesy with them, and shalt be turned into another man.”¹¹ The Holy Spirit remained with Saul as long as he stayed focused on God, but as Saul became more powerful, he allowed pride to take hold of him, and he refused to seek God for direction. Hence the Spirit left him. “But the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the Lord troubled him.”¹² According to the *Life Application Study Bible*, “The Holy Spirit can use anyone to accomplish his will, but takes residence only in those who have put their faith in Jesus Christ, trusting in his sacrifice for their salvation.”¹³ Another example is King David, who, because Saul was still legally the king, was initially anointed king in secret. It is recorded that when the prophet Samuel took the horn and anointed David, “the Spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward.”¹⁴

Prophecies in the Old Testament

The Old Testament also records important prophecies concerning the work of the Holy Spirit which may be manifested at a future time. First there was the Spirit that was to be upon the promised Messiah whom all of Israel looked forward to. Isaiah in his prophecies of the coming Messiah said,

The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison

¹¹ 1 Samuel 10:6.

¹² 1 Samuel 16:14.

¹³ *Life Application Study Bible*, 413.

¹⁴ 1 Samuel 16:13.

to them that are bound; To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn; To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he might be glorified.¹⁵

This very passage was read by Jesus himself when he went to the synagogue in his hometown of Nazareth. Jesus came at a time when Israel was under much pressure from the Romans, and reading Scripture was not an unusual act for him to perform. However, the statement which he made after reading, “This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears,”¹⁶ was one which stirred the rulers of the synagogue to desire to put him to death, but he was anointed to do unusual things. Luke records, “But he passing through the midst of them went his way.”¹⁷ This rejection of Jesus was of the very person they longed for and the one whom they needed. However, their expectation of a Messiah who would come in military form to set up an earthly kingdom had their hearts and minds blinded. The longing of Israel was evident, especially at his ascension. The apostles asked, “Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom of Israel?”¹⁸ But Jesus informed them that it was not for them to know the time or the season when this would take place. Jesus came to minister to the whole man and ultimately to restore him spiritually to a right relationship with God. Israel’s idea of how this was to happen was different from what God had planned for their lives.

¹⁵ Isaiah 61:1-3.

¹⁶ Luke 4:21.

¹⁷ Luke 4:30.

¹⁸ Acts 1:6.

Matthew records, “Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John to be baptized of him.”¹⁹ It was from this place that a fresh empowerment came upon Jesus. “And lo the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”²⁰

Prophecies in the New Testament and Their Fulfillment

The New Testament begins with the miraculous work of the Holy Spirit. The coming of Jesus Christ into the world as a baby was through the Holy Spirit overshadowing a young virgin named Mary. His work as the third person of the Trinity was empowering persons to fulfill their God-given mission on earth. Joseph was concerned about Mary’s pregnancy and considered putting her away privately. “But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the LORD appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost.”²¹ Mary herself was informed that what was happening to her was of the Holy Ghost. “The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee and the power of the highest shall overshadow thee: therefore, the holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the son of God.”²²

The Bible also declares, in a related experience, that both parents of John the Baptist had a similar revelation about their son, the forerunner of Jesus, and they were

¹⁹ Matthew 3:13.

²⁰ Matthew 3:16-17.

²¹ Matthew 1:20.

²² Luke 1:31.

baptized in the Holy Ghost. Mary, the cousin of Elizabeth, took some time to visit with her and to share the good news of her pregnancy. Mary greeted her with gracious words of commendation. “And it came to pass when Elizabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb: and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost.”²³ According the Luke, at the birth of John the Baptist, Zacharias was empowered, and three unusual things happened: he broke tradition by giving his son a name that was not in his family lineage; he was filled with the Holy Ghost; and he prophesied and praised God.²⁴

And all they that heard them laid them up in their hearts, saying, What manner of child shall this be! And the hand of the Lord was with him. And his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Ghost, and prophesied, saying, Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed his people, And hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David.²⁵

Luke describes Simeon as a just and devout man who was waiting with anticipation for Israel’s hope, the Messiah. The Holy Ghost was upon him, and he gave a prophecy concerning the life and ministry of Jesus. Among other things such as causing the rise and fall of many in Israel, the child Jesus was to be “a Light to lighten the Gentiles and the glory of his people Israel.”²⁶ The interwoven ministry of John the Baptist and Jesus, along with their parents and all others connected with their birth and dedication, were all connected and empowered by the Holy Ghost to perform and prophesy the will and purpose of God.

²³ Luke 1:41.

²⁴ Luke 1:64.

²⁵ Luke 1:66-69.

²⁶ Luke 2:32.

When John the Baptist began his ministry, it was not long before he began to warn the people to repent as well as to inform them of the limitations of his ministry and more importantly of the increasing ministry of the one who was to follow him. “And as the people were in expectation, and all men mused in their hearts of John, whether he were the Christ, or not; John answered, saying unto them all, I indeed baptize you with water; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire.”²⁷

In the Old and New Testaments, celebration of various Jewish festivals are recorded. One of these special feasts was the Feast of Pentecost, which was also referred to as the Feast of Harvest, Feast of Weeks, or Feast of Day of First Fruits. It was a celebration of the blessing of God. According to *World's Bible Handbook*, Pentecost is a Greek word signifying the fiftieth. This festival was so called because it was celebrated the fiftieth day after the second day of Pentecost. It marked the completion of the wheat harvest and commemorated the giving of the law at Sinai, fifty days after Israel's deliverance from Egypt. There was much rejoicing and thanksgiving to God.²⁸ This is affirmed in Scripture as follows, “And thou shalt rejoice before the LORD thy God, thou, and thy son, and thy daughter, and thy manservant, and thy maidservant, and the Levite that is within thy gates, and the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow, that are among you, in the place which the LORD thy God hath chosen to place his name there.”²⁹

²⁷ Luke 3:15-16.

²⁸ Robert T. Boyd, *World's Bible Handbook* (Nashville, TN: World Publishing, 1991), 690.

²⁹ Deuteronomy 16:11.

It was on this day of celebration, when Jews gathered together from around the world to participate in this annual event, that God sent the Holy Ghost upon the apostles and other believers. Luke records,

And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.³⁰

God made his presence known to those gathered at this event in an unmistakable manner: the sound of a mighty wind, the cloven tongues as of fire, and then speaking in tongues as the Holy Spirit gave utterance. The outpouring of the Holy Spirit was a fulfillment of Joel's prophecy in the Old Testament: "And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit."³¹ While in the past God's Spirit seemed to be available only to certain persons, like kings, prophets, and judges, Joel envisioned a time when the Spirit would be available to every believer.

Prior to the day of Pentecost, persons or groups were empowered to do various tasks and to prophesy of future events. However, as of the day of Pentecost, "speaking in tongues or glossolalia (from Gk. *glossais lalo*), was considered by New Testament

³⁰ Acts 2:1-4.

³¹ Joel 2:28-29.

Christians as a God-given sign accompanying the baptism of the Holy Spirit.”³² Forty days after his resurrection, after proving to many that he was alive, after teaching about the kingdom of God, and just before his ascension to the Father, Jesus gathered with the apostles and instructed them not to leave Jerusalem “but [to] wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.”³³ Jesus explained that they should not be concerned about when there will be a restoration of the kingdom to Israel, but he assured them that this baptism of the Holy Ghost was to empower them to be his witnesses around the world, beginning at their home base in Jerusalem. “But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.”³⁴

This promise made by Jesus was fulfilled in the lives of the apostles and 120 believers ten days after his ascension to his Father. This event, which took place during the Feast of Pentecost and later became known as the day of Pentecost, sent a strong message all around the world. The accompanying tongues which came on the day of Pentecost have been one of the major doctrinal differences between Pentecostals and non-Pentecostals. In particular, how and when the Spirit manifests himself has been one of the main doctrinal differences between classical and charismatic Pentecostals.

Speaking in tongues is a supernatural manifestation of the Holy Spirit, i.e., a Spirit inspired utterance whereby the believer speaks in a language (*Gr glossa*)

³² *Full Life Study Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1992), 1656.

³³ Acts 1:4-5.

³⁴ Acts 1:8.

he has never learned (Acts 2:4; 1 Cor. 14:14–15). It may be in existing human languages (Acts 2:6) or in languages unknown on earth (cf. 1 Cor. 13:1). It is not “ecstatic speech” as rendered in some translations, for the Bible never uses the term “ecstatic utterance” to refer to speaking in tongues.³⁵

The charismatic movement, “refers to all manifestations of Pentecostal-type Christianity that in some way differ from classical Pentecostalism in affiliation and/or doctrine.”³⁶ There are independent churches and groups which vary in their belief as it relates to the evidence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Some believe that they are baptized in the Holy Spirit but have no need to speak in tongues, neither is tongues the initial evidence of this experience. Others believe that speaking in tongues is just for some members of the church, yet others, though independent in their structure and operations, believe, like the charismatic Pentecostals, that speaking in tongues is a part of the work of the Holy spirit, but not the initial evidence of it.

With reference to speaking in tongues, a doctrine taught by classical Pentecostals but not supported by charismatic Pentecostals as initial evidence of baptism in the Holy Spirit, it is noted that

speaking in tongues is an inspired utterance whereby the spirit of the believer and the Holy Spirit join in verbal praise and/or prophecy. God linked speaking in tongues with the baptism of the Holy Spirit from the very beginning (Acts 2:4) so that the (120) believers at Pentecost, and believers thereafter, would have an experiential sign or confirmation that they have indeed received the baptism in the Holy Spirit (cf. Acts 10:45–46). Thus, this experience could be objectively validated as to a place and time of reception.³⁷

³⁵ *Full Life Study Bible*, 1656.

³⁶ Burgess and van der Maas, eds., *New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, 477.

³⁷ *Full Life Study Bible*, 1656.

Speaking in tongues is also given as a gift to believers, so that among other things, two main objectives could be accomplished. The apostle Paul taught the Corinthian several lessons on this topic.

This gift has two main purposes: (a) Speaking in tongues accompanied by interpretation is used in public worship services to communicate the content of the utterance to the congregation in order that all may enter into the Spirit-directed praise, worship or prophecy. (b) Speaking in tongues is used by the believer to speak to God in his or her personal devotions and thus to build up one's spiritual life. It means speaking at the level of the spirit for the purpose of praying, giving thanks or singing.³⁸

The outpouring of the Holy Spirit and speaking in tongues came without regard for age, gender, nationality, or social, economic, or educational status. The pouring out of the Spirit was to be upon all flesh, according to Joel's prophecy. In the Old Testament, the Spirit of the Lord which came upon and empowered individuals to perform certain acts seemed selective (e.g., kings, prophets, and judges), but the prophet Joel gave an inclusive prophecy, which was without exception given to all individuals, both young and old, males and females.

The experience Peter had with Cornelius was another example of the power of the Holy Spirit to perform in and through individual persons or groups. In this instance, the Holy Spirit broke down social and religious barriers by bringing Peter, a Jew, and Cornelius, a Gentile, together. The separate but related visions of Peter and Cornelius were the direct connection for both of them to obey God and be blessed. At their meeting Cornelius declared, "Immediately therefore, I sent to thee; and thou hast well

³⁸ *Full Life Study Bible*, 1656.

done that thou art come. Now therefore are we all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God.”³⁹

It was considered an act of defilement for a Jew to enter the house of a Gentile, but Peter obeyed God’s instructions in his vision and embraced the Gentile family, thereby demonstrating that racial prejudices should be eliminated. “Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, ‘Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons.’”⁴⁰ What Peter never could accept before or ever believed would happen took place, and by his submission he gained new understandings of expanding the body of new believers, who were now witnesses of Jesus Christ. He declared, “But in every nation, he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him.”⁴¹ Not only were these things accomplished, but those at Cornelius’s house spoke with tongues and glorified God, which confirmed what Peter said in his message on the day of Pentecost. This was the fulfillment of Joel’s prophecy that God would pour out his Spirit on all flesh.

The main method of spreading the gospel from the city of Jerusalem after Jesus’ resurrection came through the great persecution of the Christians. Events such as the 120 believers being filled with the Holy Ghost and speaking in tongues, the great speech of Peter after the healing of the lame man at the gate Beautiful, the miraculous release of Peter from prison and the fact that these common men were doing things never done before, caused the rulers to feel out of control and helpless. They therefore began to take drastic actions to discourage the apostles, such as the stoning of Stephen. “And at

³⁹ Acts 10:33.

⁴⁰ Acts 10:34.

⁴¹ Acts 8:35.

that time there was great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles.”⁴² The members who left the city for other areas were so excited that they felt compelled to carry the message of Pentecost wherever they went. “Therefore, they that were scattered went everywhere preaching the word. Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria and preached Christ unto them.”⁴³ Not only were people receptive to the preaching of the brethren, but also they rejoiced for the great and marvelous things that they had heard and seen.

The work in Samaria began growing at a rapid pace and therefore required support from Jerusalem in order to maintain the momentum and encourage further growth. “Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that the Samaritans had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John who when they were come down prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Ghost . . . then laid they their hands on them and they received the Holy Ghost.”⁴⁴

It was being baptized in the Holy Spirit that empowered the believers in the early church to speak the word of God and witness to their faith in Jesus Christ with such great boldness. It was that part of the Trinity that Jesus told his disciples to wait for in Jerusalem, and it was what Peter told his listeners about in his message on the day of Pentecost when the people of the city thought that the 120 believers who were gathered in the upper room and spoke with other tongues were drunk with new wine.

⁴² Acts 8:1.

⁴³ Acts 8:4-5.

⁴⁴ Acts 8:14-17.

After Peter explained why this was occurring, they were convicted and asked what they needed to do. “Then Peter said unto them, Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.”⁴⁵ It is obvious that this promise was for succeeding generations until the Lord returns for the church. “The baptism in the Holy Spirit, with its accompanying power, was not a once-for-all occurrence in the church’s history. It did not cease with Pentecost nor with the close of the apostolic age. It is the birthright of every Christian to seek, expect and experience the same baptism in the Spirit that was promised and given to the New Testament Christians.”⁴⁶

Being full of the Holy Ghost was one of the qualifications for being set forth in ministry. “Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables. Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business.”⁴⁷

After Saul’s conversion on the Damascus road, he was left blind and had to be led to the city to await God’s instruction. He was not to be commissioned for ministry until Ananias arrived and said, “Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto

⁴⁵ Acts 2:38-39.

⁴⁶ *Full Life Study Bible*, 1661.

⁴⁷ Acts 6:2-3.

thee in the way as thou camest, has sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost.”⁴⁸

The power of the Holy Ghost also enables one to encourage effectively and strengthen others in the faith. Barnabas was sent to Antioch to do just that: “who when he came and had seen the grace of God was glad, and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they should cleave unto the Lord. For he was a good man and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith. Then departed Barnabas unto Tarsus, for to seek Saul.”⁴⁹

On Paul’s third missionary journey he visited the city of Ephesus and found believers who were baptized “unto John’s baptism.”⁵⁰ His question to them led to a life-changing experience for them and many others in the city: “Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?”⁵¹ They informed him that they were not aware if there was any Holy Ghost. Paul instructed them that they should believe on the Lord Jesus Christ; they complied and were baptized. Paul then laid his hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost, “and they spake with tongues and prophesied.”⁵²

The baptism in the Holy Ghost and speaking in tongues brought power for service, healing to the sick, deliverance to those bound by unclean spirits, joy to the hearts of the depressed, hope to the hopeless, and salvation to the lost. However, this new religious experience also brought tension and discord to the cities and towns, especially among the rulers of the Jews who resisted and condemned this phenomenon that was affecting their traditional manner of worship. “And as they spake unto the

⁴⁸ Acts 9:17.

⁴⁹ Acts 11:23-26.

⁵⁰ Acts 19:3.

⁵¹ Acts 19:2.

⁵² Acts 19:6.

people, the priests, and the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees, came upon them, Being grieved that they taught the people, and preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead. And they laid hands on them, and put them in hold unto the next day: for it was now eventide.”⁵³ In the midst of miracles such as the lame man being healed at the gate called Beautiful and the untimely death of Ananias and Sapphira, as a result of their decision to “lie to the Holy Ghost, and keep back part of the price of the land,”⁵⁴ the religious leaders were still relentless in their efforts to stop the work of the apostles. “Then the high priest rose up, and all they that were with him, (which is the sect of the Sadducees,) and were filled with indignation, And laid their hands on the apostles, and put them in the common prison.”⁵⁵ The rulers were even prepared to accuse falsely the apostles just to silence their ministry.

And they stirred up the people, and the elders, and the scribes, and came upon him, and caught him, and brought him to the council, And set up false witnesses, which said, This man ceaseth not to speak blasphemous words against this holy place, and the law: For we have heard him say, that this Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place, and shall change the customs which Moses delivered us.⁵⁶

The Jewish nation was already being oppressed by a foreign power, and therefore the religious leaders fully understood the desire for freedom of worship and autonomy in general. However, they were now directing religious persecution at their own nationals and others who also desired to worship in a manner which they thought to be in accordance with Scripture. These legal and religious maneuvers, however, served as a

⁵³ Acts 4:1-3.

⁵⁴ Acts 5:3.

⁵⁵ Acts 5:17-18.

⁵⁶ Acts 6:12-14.

magnet, drawing people to the movement and acting as a catalyst to expand its growth.

“Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.”⁵⁷

In spite of persecution, the number of persons who were joining the apostles continued to increase: “Howbeit many of them which heard the word believed; and the number of men was five thousand.”⁵⁸ The truth of the Pentecostal message preached by the apostles and the effective fulfillment of Joel’s prophecy (Joel 2:28-29) soon not only convicted and convinced the ordinary members of the temple and the synagogue, but also the message reached many of the leaders. “And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith.”⁵⁹

The ministry of the apostles did not grow without strong opposition and persecution for the sake of Christ. But none of the opposition or persecution was endured without yielding the benefits of sharing the gospel, that is, seeing people converted to Jesus Christ. Unfortunately, this truth has an attraction for those who are selfish power seekers who are determined to advance their own cause at the expense of others. This was the intention of Simon, a sorcerer in Samaria. After seeing Peter and John laying their hands on the believers and people receiving the Holy Ghost, Simon offered Peter and John money to obtain the power to do the same. This matter ended

⁵⁷ Acts 2:41.

⁵⁸ Acts 4:4.

⁵⁹ Acts 6:7.

when Peter rebuked Simon for being in “the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity.”⁶⁰ Peter encouraged him, and he sought repentance for his wickedness.

There are two points which are brought out by this event relating to the ministry of the Word. First, wherever there is truth, falsehood will emerge, and there are always persons who are willing to use untruth and imitation for selfish reasons. Second, Simon wanted the power because of what he saw.

The Spirit’s falling upon the Samaritans was accompanied by observable external manifestations apparent even to Simon the sorcerer. It is reasonable to conclude that the observable manifestations were like those which occurred after His coming upon the earliest disciples at Pentecost, i.e., speaking with other tongues. This manifestation gave both the Samaritans and the apostles a verifiable sign that the Holy Spirit had fallen upon the new believers.⁶¹

⁶⁰ Acts 8:23.

⁶¹ *Full Life Study Bible*, 1676.

Conclusion

This biblical and theological perspective gives a review of prophecies concerning the Spirit of the Lord and their fulfillment. Concomitant with the fulfillment of the prophecies was the required transition from the traditional form of worship and all of its liturgy to what may have been regarded at that time as a more contemporary form of worship. Many times, what persons claim to believe and expect to see manifested becomes difficult to accept when it is revealed. This is especially true when our expectation is different from the reality that God has planned. The Jewish religious leaders obviously were not expecting the kind of transition, which began with the ministry of John the Baptist, was vibrant throughout the ministry of Jesus, and became explosive on the day of Pentecost.

Because of the misconceptions expressed and the mockery made of the apostle on the day of Pentecost, Peter had to remind his audience that what they were seeing was not due to manmade innovations but was a direct fulfillment of the prophecy of Joel. Similar responses were also received and a constant repetition had to be made when the Pentecostal fulfillment was experienced in many areas of the world. The Bahamas was no exception, and believers who had a Pentecostal experience had to endure much persecution, misunderstanding, and social and religious isolation. However, as in many areas of the world, the Pentecostal movement in the Bahamas survived and continues to grow as an important and influential segment of the religious community.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE PROJECT

Introduction

If there is one thing that is constant in our world today, it is change, and whether change is taking place slowly or quickly, what is certain is that it is taking place.

However, for the most part, change takes place at such a rapid pace that it is difficult to keep up with or even know when it takes place, why it takes place, or even recognize the effect that the change has on individuals, groups, or society as a whole until it has already done so. This is a scenario that takes place in every aspect of life including the church and Christendom. Therefore, as the stated purpose of this study is to examine if there is a transitioning from classical to charismatic Pentecostalism in the Bahamas, the causes and effects, persons who are a part of both of these groupings within Pentecostalism had to be a part of this study. The demographics of the participants had to cover a number of areas that would give some indications as to their decision and whether it was influenced by their age, gender, family, social and educational background, or some other factors. One can identify various factors that distinguish classical from charismatic Pentecostals. However, I have, in this study, focused on tongues as the initial physical evidence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit as the characteristic distinctive.

Method of Investigation

The population of the Bahamas is spread out over seven hundred islands in an area of one hundred thousand square miles. However, the major segments of the population are concentrated on a few larger islands which also have the major classical and charismatic churches concerned with this study.

A review of the options that were available to me revealed that to produce the most comprehensive data for precise analysis as to whether there is a transitioning clearly showed that the two largest population centers of the country, namely, Nassau, New Providence, and Freeport, Grand Bahama, would provide the most accurate data, as these areas have a number of churches which include my target population.

There is very little literature written on the topic of the growth of the charismatic movement in the Bahamas. Therefore, to determine the extent or lack thereof of a transitioning from classical to charismatic Pentecostalism in the Bahamas, the data had to be collected from the members of classical and charismatic churches. It was made clear by Dr. Bryan Auday in his research methodology class what the advantages and disadvantages are of using the various methods of research. To achieve the desired goals of this study I chose the questionnaire as the survey instrument because it is

- efficient and economical
- easy to complete and return in a short time period
- capable of producing a large volume of data that is not difficult to score and tabulate
- capable of producing data that is not difficult to understand

- proficient in producing sensitive information
- proficient in encouraging participants to give honest answers
- designed not to have many open-ended questions

Participants in the Survey

Personal contacts were made with each church pastor where I thought that the survey could be conducted to determine that their church was either classical or charismatic. Further, I informed them that I was a Doctor of Ministry candidate with Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary in Boston, Massachusetts, USA, and that I was conducting a survey and was requesting their permission for one to be conducted at their church. After receiving their permission, the process was explained and the desired numbers of the questionnaire were delivered to the churches. To ensure that an equal opportunity was given to persons who attend the classical as well as the charismatic churches in the Bahamas to respond to the questionnaire, the survey documents were distributed in equal numbers to both types of local churches in Nassau and in Grand Bahama. The agreement from all of the pastors was that they would conduct the survey either during a mid-week Bible study, Sunday morning Sunday school, or just after a Sunday morning service between November 12 and 26, 2017. They were also reminded that the survey was not to be completed by anyone under eighteen years of age.

Three hundred total copies of the questionnaire were distributed to eleven churches. Of the 300 distributed, 280 were returned, representing a 96.3% return rate. The survey package included a letter to the participants (see Appendix A) explaining

who I was and what I needed them to do and thanking them for their involvement. They were especially reminded that they had to be over eighteen years of age in order to participate in the survey and should give only one response to each question.

Survey Instrument

The questionnaire used to collect the data consisted of sixteen questions which were grouped to provide the necessary responses based on the stated goals of the study. The first four questions were personal demographic questions. The following five questions were structured multiple-choice questions related to the respondent's connection to Pentecostalism past and present. The next six questions were also structured multiple-choice questions designed to determine the respondents' belief in certain aspects of Pentecostalism and their knowledge of the movement in the Bahamas. The final question was given to measure how the respondents viewed the overall expansion of Pentecostalism in the Bahamas (see Appendix B).

Findings and Results

The descriptive analysis of the data was performed by calculating frequencies and percentages of the response categories associated with each survey question. For ease of understanding, the descriptive statistics are displayed in either frequency tables, cross-tabulation tables, or bar graphs. The following is a brief description of these data presentation tools:

1. A **frequency table** is a mathematical graph that identifies the number of times pieces of data occur in a given sequence. Most frequency tables contain three columns and between five and ten rows.¹
2. A **bar graph** is a method for visualizing a set of data. Simple **bar graphs** compare data with one independent variable and can relate to a set point or range of data. Complex **bar graphs** compare data with two independent variables. Either type of **graph** can be oriented horizontally or vertically.²
3. **Cross tabulation** is a statistical tool that is used to analyze categorical data. Categorical data is data or variables that are separated into different categories that are mutually exclusive from one another. Cross tabulation helps one understand how two different variables are related to each other. For example, suppose one wants to see if there is a relationship between the gender of the survey responder and if sex education in high school is important.³

¹ "Frequency table" accessed December 9, 2017, www.reference.com/math/frequency-table-c44174ad810c28d3.

² "Bar graph," December 9, 2017, <https://study.com/academy/lesson/bar-graph-definition-types>.

³ "Cross tabulation," accessed December 9, 2017, <https://study.com/academy/lesson/cross-tabulation-definition>.

Table 1: Gender

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	176	62.9	62.9	62.9
	Female	104	37.1	37.1	100.0
	Total	280	100.0	100.0	

This survey produced an excellent rate of return, but what is especially unique about this demographic is that 176 or 62.9% of the respondents were males and 104 or 37.1% were females. This researcher has no explanation for this because pastors agreed to distribute and collect the questionnaires at different times and services.

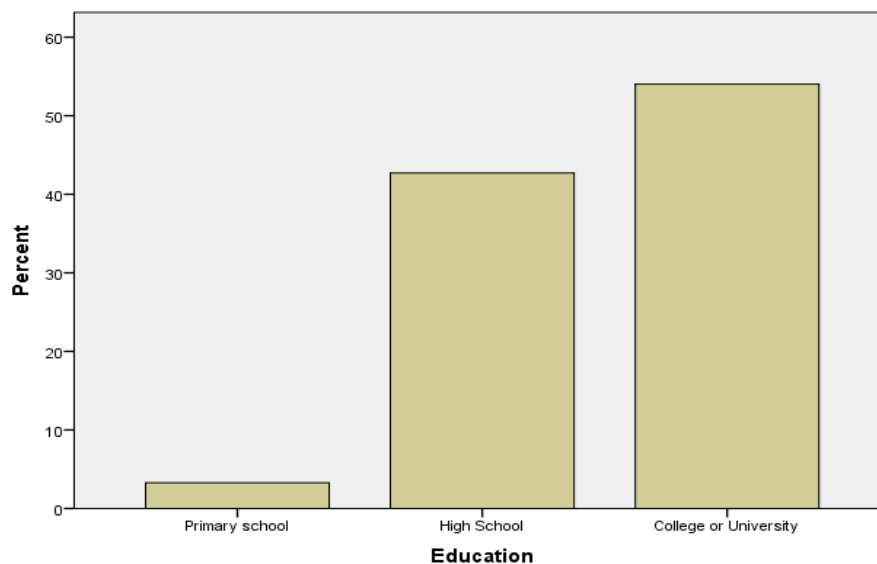
Table 2: Age

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	17 or under	2	.7	.7	.7
	18 - 30 years	34	12.1	12.2	12.9
	31 - 45 years	69	24.6	24.7	37.6
	46 - 60 years	112	40.0	40.1	77.8
	61 + years	62	22.1	22.2	100.0
	Total	279	99.6	100.0	
Missing	System	1	.4		
Total		280	100.0		

Out of the total number of 279 respondents to this item, 2 or .7% were 17 years or under; 34 or 12.2% were between the ages of 18 to 30 years; 69 or 24.7% were between the ages of 31 and 45 years; 112 or 40.1% were between the ages of 46 and 60; years and 62 or 22.2% were 61 + years. Overall, 105 or 37.6% were 45 years or younger, and 174 or 62.3% were 46 years and older.

Further, these statistics inform that 243 or 87% of the respondents were over the age of 30 years, indicating that these should be matured, settled individuals who are capable of making decisions reflective of their age and other developmental factors; 36 or 12.8% were 30 years or younger.

Figure 1: Highest Level of Education Obtained



Of the 274 respondents to this item, for 9 or 3.3% the highest level of education obtained was at the primary level; 117 or 42.7% obtained a high-school-level education; and 148 or 54% obtained a college or university-level education.

These statistics serve as a confirmation of the changing educational demographics of members of Pentecostal churches who were once believed to come only from the lower socio-economic brackets of society. The 3.3% of the sample is an indication that persons educated only at the primary-school level are quickly becoming an obsolete factor, and the 54% now being educated at the college and university levels is rapidly becoming the norm for persons attending Pentecostal churches. The increased educational level also has an economic implication, as the higher level of education achieved could mean that this would create greater earning power for these individuals and increased support for local churches.

Table 3: How Long Have You Been a Member of This Church?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	5 - 10 years	71	25.4	26.6	26.6
	11 - 20 years	59	21.1	22.1	48.7
	21 - 30 years	41	14.6	15.4	64.0
	31 + years	96	34.3	36.0	100.0
	Total	267	95.4	100.0	
Missing	System	13	4.6		
Total		280	100.0		

Out of a total of 267 participants responding to this item, 71 or 26.6% were members of the church for 5 to 10 years; 59 or 22.1% were members for 11 to 20 years;

41 or 15.4 % were members for 21 to 30 years; and 96 or 36% were members for 31 + years.

These statistics reveal that the largest membership group is persons who have been with the church for 31+ years and is represented by 96 individuals or 36%. While the two middle groups of 11 to 20 years and 21 to 30 years are smaller, the first group, which represents younger and the future of the movement is represented by 71 individuals or 26.6 %. This could also indicate that the Pentecostal church is still attracting new persons if consideration is given to a group that would have joined in less than five years.

Table 4: As a Christian, Which Type of Pentecostal Would You Be Classified As?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Classical Pentecostal	178	63.6	63.8	63.8
	Charismatic Pentecostal	65	23.2	23.3	87.1
	Don't know	36	12.9	12.9	100.0
	Total	279	99.6	100.0	
Missing	System	1	.4		
Total		280	100.0		

Only 1 person did not respond to this question; the other 279 participants responded. Of the respondents, 178 or 63.8% claimed to be classical Pentecostal, 65 or

23.3% claimed to be charismatic Pentecostal, and 36 or 12.9% did not know which group they belong to.

Several points can be derived from Table 4. First is that such a significant number of church members do not know which type of church they belong to. Second, since the total amount of questionnaires were evenly distributed between classical and charismatic churches and 63.8% claim that they are classical, it may be concluded that all members do not understand their church, and this could reflect on the level of teaching that they are receiving in their local church. Further, it could also mean that some classical Pentecostal members are attending charismatic churches but are not members for personal reasons.

Table 5: Were You Ever a Member of a Church That Teaches That Speaking in Tongues Is the Initial Evidence of Being Baptized with the Holy Spirit?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes, I am still a member	221	78.9	80.1	80.1
	Yes, but I am no longer a member	14	5.0	5.1	85.1
	No, I have never been a member	41	14.6	14.9	100.0
	Total	276	98.6	100.0	
Missing	System	4	1.4		
Total		280	100.0		

There were 276 respondents to this question, with 4 giving no response. Of the respondents, 221 or 80.1% said that they were still a member of a church that teaches that speaking in tongues is the initial evidence of being baptized with the Holy Spirit. Among the other respondents, 14 or 5.1% said that they were but are no longer a member, and 41 or 14.9% said that they have never been a member.

With 221 individuals claiming to still be members of a classical Pentecostal church, it indicates that some of the persons attending charismatic churches are only regular attendees and not official members. Further, it appears that only a small portion, 14 or 5.1%, of those who are members of a charismatics church were once members of a classical Pentecostal church.

Table 6: Were Your Parents or Grandparents Members of a Classical Pentecostal Church?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	168	60.0	61.3	61.3
	No	106	37.9	38.7	100.0
	Total	274	97.9	100.0	
Missing	System	6	2.1		
Total		280	100.0		

There were 274 respondents to this question, and of them, 168 or 61.3% claimed that their parents or grandparents were members of a classical Pentecostal church. This means that family relations had some influence on their decision to become a member. Among the respondents, 106 or 38.7% claimed that their parents or grandparents were not members of a classical Pentecostal church; 6 or 2.1% did not respond to this question. While 61.3% of the classical Pentecostal church members had the connection of a parent or grandparent, 38.7% were persons who came into a classical Pentecostal church because of other reasons.

Table 7: Do You Have Children or Grandchildren Who Are Members of a Charismatic Church?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	118	42.1	43.5	43.5
	No	153	54.6	56.5	100.0
	Total	271	96.8	100.0	
Missing	System	9	3.2		
Total		280	100.0		

There were 271 respondents to this question; 118 or 43.5% have children or grandchildren who are members of a charismatic church and 153 or 56.5% do not have any children or grandchildren in a charismatic church.

Based on the survey which told us that approximately 64% of the respondents involved in this survey are classical Pentecostals, then it would be reasonable to conclude that at least more than 30 % of the charismatics would have children who members of the charismatic church, since families tend to worship together.

Table 8: If You Are No Longer a Member of a Church That Teaches That Speaking in Tongues Is the Initial Evidence of Being Baptized in the Holy Spirit, Why Did You Leave?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	I do not believe speaking in tongues is initial evidence	49	17.5	43.4	43.4
	Moved to this church with my spouse or other family member	38	13.6	33.6	77.0
	Other reasons	26	9.3	23.0	100.0
	Total	113	40.4	100.0	
Missing	System	167	59.6		
Total		280	100.0		

For this question, only 113 or 40.4% of the total number of participants responded; 167 or 59.6% did not respond. Of those responding, 49 or 43.4% said that they changed from a classical to a charismatic church because they did not believe speaking in tongues is the initial evidence of being baptized in the Holy Spirit. Among the respondents, 38 or 33.6 % moved to a charismatic church with their spouse or other family member, and 26 or 23% had other reasons for moving.

Table 9: Do You Believe That an Individual Can Be Baptized in the Holy Spirit and Not Ever Speak in Tongues?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	157	56.1	58.8	58.8
	No	110	39.3	41.2	100.0
	Total	267	95.4	100.0	
Missing	System	13	4.6		
Total		280	100.0		

Out of 267 responses to this question, 157 or 58.8% said yes, 110 or 41.2% said no, and 13 or 4.6% did not respond. This is a unique observation because in Table 4, only 101 or 36.2% of the respondents claimed to be charismatic or did not know which

group they belong to, while 1 or .4% did not respond. This indicates that at least 55 or 20.6% of the respondents who agreed with the question were classical Pentecostals.

Table 10: Do You Speak in Tongues?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	160	57.1	57.8	57.8
	No	105	37.5	37.9	95.7
	Used to, but not any more	12	4.3	4.3	100.0
	Total	277	98.9	100.0	
Missing	System	3	1.1		
Total		280	100.0		

There were 277 respondents to this question; 160 or 57.8% said they do speak in tongues, 105 or 37.5% said they do not speak in tongues, and 12 or 4.3% said that they used to, but not anymore. The results in this table are consistent with Table 5, with approximately 64% of the respondents being classical; as well as with Table 10, with 41% of respondents who do not believe that one has to speak in tongues to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

Table 11: Do You Believe That the Classical Pentecostal Church in the Bahamas Is Growing More Than the Charismatic Church?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Frequency
Valid	Yes	76	27.1	27.5	27.5
	No	109	38.9	39.5	67.0
	Don't know	91	32.5	33.0	100.0
	Total	276	98.6	100.0	
Missing	System	4	1.4		
Total		280	100.0		

Out of the 276 respondents to this question, 76 or 27.5%, making up the minority, said that they do believe that the classical Pentecostal church in the Bahamas is growing more than the charismatic church. However, 109 or 39.5%, which was the majority, disagreed with that opinion. Of the respondents, 91 or 33% said they did not know. These results leave a majority of 73.9% who disagreed, did not know, or did not respond.

Table 12: Why Do You Think That They Are Not Growing?

	Frequenc y	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Speaking in tongues is not being taught as initial evidence of being baptized in Holy Spirit	63	22.5	36.8	36.8
Many people do not believe speaking in tongues is initial evidence of baptism of Holy Spirit	35	12.5	20.5	57.3
Churches are not evangelizing as they did before	73	26.1	42.7	100.0
Total	171	61.1	100.0	
System	109	38.9		
Total	280	100.0		

In response to this question, 63 or 36.8% of those who responded said that speaking in tongues is not being taught as the initial evidence of being baptized in the Holy Spirit, 35 or 20.5% said many people do not believe speaking in tongues is the initial evidence of the baptism of the Holy spirit, and 73 or 42.75 said churches are not evangelizing as did before.

The data from this table clearly state that the church is not doing all that it should to educate its members on its doctrinal beliefs and practices, and it is not doing

all that it should to evangelize its prospective members and therefore it is not growing as it could.

Table 13: Do You Believe the Charismatic Pentecostal Church in the Bahamas Is Growing More Than the Classical Pentecostal Church?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	122	43.6	45.2	45.2
No	44	15.7	16.3	61.5
Don't know	104	37.1	38.5	100.0
Total	270	96.4	100.0	
System	10	3.6		
Total	280	100.0		

A total of 270 participants responded to this question; 122 or 45.2% said they believe that charismatic churches are growing more than the classical Pentecostal churches. Only 44 or 16.3% said they do not believe charismatic churches are growing faster, and 104 or 38.5% said they did not know.

These data correlate with information analyzed in Table 11, where only 27.5% agreed that classical Pentecostals were growing more than charismatic Pentecostals and 109 or 39.5% disagreed. This means that between 39 and 45.2% of the participants in

this survey believe that charismatic churches are growing more than the classical Pentecostal churches. However, approximately 55% either disagree or do not know.

Table 14: If Your Answer to 13 Is No, Why Do You Think They Are Not?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Persons are not being taught about manifestation of the Holy Spirit as before	42	15.0	34.1	34.1
	Many believe that speaking in tongues is initial evidence of baptism of the Holy Spirit	24	8.6	19.5	53.7
	Churches are not evangelizing as they did before	57	20.4	46.3	100.0
	Total	123	43.9	100.0	
Missing	System	157	56.1		
Total		280	100.0		

This table should have attracted responses from 44 respondents based on the No answers given in Table 13. However, based on the total of 270 responses given in Table 13, a total of 123 persons responded to this question, which represents less than half of the total respondents who responded to this survey. Of the respondents, 42 or 34.1% said that charismatic are not growing because they are not being taught about

the manifestation of the Spirit as before. Another 24 or 19.5% said that many persons believe that speaking in tongues is the initial evidence of baptism of the Holy Spirit, and 57 or 46.3% of the respondents said that churches are not evangelizing as they did before.

Table 15: Do You Believe That Over the Past Fifty Years More Non-Pentecostal Churches in the Bahamas Are Adopting Some of the Pentecostal Doctrine and Style of Worship?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	206	73.6	74.6	74.6
	No	10	3.6	3.6	78.3
	Don't know	60	21.4	21.7	100.0
	Total	276	98.6	100.0	
Missing	System	4	1.4		
Total		280	100.0		

Of the 276 respondents, 206 or 74.6% said yes, 10 or 3.6% said no, and 60 or 21.7% said they did not know. There was an overwhelming yes response to the question as to whether the respondents believe that more of the non-Pentecostal denominational churches are adopting the doctrine and worship style of the Pentecostal

church. Only a small portion, 10 or 3.6%, said that they do not believe this to be the case. This positive response came about due to the impact of the Pentecostal churches in the Bahamas and the influence of religious television from the United States.

CHAPTER FIVE

OUTCOMES AND CONCLUSIONS

Introduction

From the time of the early church to the present, the church has been going through changes. Not all of these changes were by God's design because man has a way of allowing carnality to overcome and rule him. However, many of the changes over the ages which the church went through as a part of God's refining process were to achieve particular goals and ultimately to bring the church to the glorious state of perfection.

The body of Christ is made up of many members, all with specific roles that allow the body to function effectively and thereby fulfill its purpose through the contributions of its individual parts. The purpose of this study was to examine whether the Pentecostal church in the Bahamas is transitioning in some way from the classical Pentecostal base toward a charismatic base. Further, this study was to evaluate what were the causes and effects, if any, of the transitioning. These goals were of particular interest because classical Pentecostalism came to the Bahamas in 1909 and until the late 1960s and early 1970s that had been the ecclesiastical mode of the Pentecostal Church in the Bahamas.

Because of the history and characterization of classical Pentecostalism by many, any changes within the movement encourage an inquiry as to why they are taking place and how change is affecting the movement and society as a whole. With exposure to higher education in the United States, where the charismatic movement was becoming

more popular in the 1960s and 1970s, Bahamians were attracted to this type of Pentecostalism and were encouraged to inculcate it as a part of their belief system. From personal knowledge of the movement I am aware that a large segment of the membership of the charismatic church in the Bahamas came from a cross section of established non-Pentecostal churches similar to what took place in the early development of the movement in the United States. The extent to which the charismatic movement has been accepted in the Bahamian society and the reasons why it has been is the question which I hope to answer as a result of this study.

Outcomes and Conclusions

Is There Any Transition Taking Place?

The data collected revealed several factors which support the thesis statement: Transitioning from Classical to Charismatic Pentecostalism in the Bahamas. The investigation affirmed that

1. 23.3% of the respondents to the survey reported that they are charismatic Pentecostals. This means that they believe in the baptism of the Holy Spirit but do not believe that speaking in tongues is the initial evidence of this baptism. This percentage informs that over the past fifty years, since the charismatic movement started its work in the Bahamas, it has grown to 23.3% of the entire Pentecostal movement in the Bahamas.
2. According to question 6, and responses presented in Table 5, 5.1% of the respondents claimed that they were once classical Pentecostals but are now

charismatic Pentecostals. This finding confirms that for some reasons persons have move from the classical to the charismatic church.

3. 58.8% of the respondents indicated that they believe that one could be baptized with the Holy Spirit and never speak in tongues. This is strong evidence that there is some transitioning in the belief systems or there is a serious lack of teaching on the part of classical Pentecostals to those who hold membership in their churches. Even with the 41% who did not believe that it is possible, the positive side must have included some classical Pentecostals, which have the largest number of members in the Bahamas.
4. with 43.5% of the individuals reporting they have children or grandchildren who are members of a charismatic church, some level of transitioning is taking place because only 36.2% of classical and charismatic Pentecostals did not know to which group of Pentecostals they belong. This indicates that some children of classical Pentecostals are in the charismatic churches as a part of a transition.
5. the responses given to questions 11 and 14, which seek to determine what members think about the growth of the classical and charismatic churches in the Bahamas, shows some transitioning. Question 12 received only 27.5% positive response that classical Pentecostal churches are growing more than the charismatic churches. However, question 14 received a 45.2% positive response, indicating that charismatic churches are growing more than the classical Pentecostal churches. These general perceptions are either true or

an indication of the enthusiasm held by charismatic members for that segment of the movement.

It is important to note that respondents also gave reasons as to why they think classical Pentecostal churches are not growing more than the charismatic churches. More than three quarters (79.5%) of them gave two reasons for this occurrence: 36.8% of them said that speaking in tongues is not being taught as the initial evidence of being baptized in the Holy Spirit; and 42.7% said that churches are not evangelizing as they did before.

To a similar question, Do you believe that the charismatic church in the Bahamas is growing more than classical Pentecostal church?, the following responses were received:

1. 45.2% of the respondents said that the charismatic church is growing more than the classical church, which is a significant positive response.
2. 16.3% of the respondents answered no to the question. However, 38.5% of the respondents indicated that they did not know.

The Extent of the Transition

The overall growth of the charismatic movement has been just over 23% of the Pentecostal movement in the Bahamas. Considering that the charismatic movement started in the Bahamas more than sixty years after classical Pentecostalism came to the Bahamas, the charismatic movement has made considerable strides. It is obvious that their size may be a little larger than the 23.3% recorded, because 12.9% of the

respondents did not know which type of church they were a part of. However, this percentage of persons is shared by classical and charismatic Pentecostals. The age for charismatic members range from 18 to 61 years, and the level of education ranges from primary school to university level, matching up with classical Pentecostals in all of these areas. While there are not many charismatic churches, those that took part in the survey are churches that seemed to be fully organized and functioning well. Their ministries cover a wide range of relevant needs and are connected to their communities. They therefore have great potential for growth. Further, the transition has created to some extent a separation of families who would have normally worshiped at a classical Pentecostal church and would possibly have accepted the option that speaking in tongues is the initial evidence of being baptized in the Holy Spirit.

Table 5 indicates that 5.1% of the respondents were once members of the classical Pentecostal church but are no longer members for one reason or another. This indicates that not many of the older, established members were as attracted to transitioning as the younger individuals. However, more than 61.3% who are charismatics stated that either their parents or grandparents are members of a classical Pentecostal church. This further indicates that the younger and maybe more exposed to education generation decided to follow the charismatic rather than the classical Pentecostals. This is also confirmed in Table 7, where 43.5% of the respondents claimed that they have children or grandchildren who are members of the charismatic church. These charismatic churches in the Bahamas are located in the two major populated centers of Nassau, New Providence and Freeport, Grand Bahama. In the more sparsely

populated areas of the Bahamas, the traditional classical Pentecostal churches that have been established for many years before 1970 remain unaffected by the charismatic movement. This is another indication that charismatic Pentecostal churches have a greater attraction for the younger generation who live in the city centers of the nation which are more socially, educationally, and economically progressive.

Causes of the Transition

There could be several reasons why persons transitioned from classical to charismatic Pentecostalism. From data collected, several indications were given which are direct and others which could be suggested.

First, 49 of the 113 respondents or 43.4% noted (Table 9) that they left the classical Pentecostal church because they did not believe in the doctrine of speaking in tongues as the initial evidence of being baptized in the Holy Spirit. Those who left could have included younger persons who attained legal age and did not have to follow their parents, or they could have been individuals and or families who decided that they no longer believe in the “initial evidence’ doctrine.

Second, 38 of the 113 respondents or 33.6% noted that they moved from a classical to a charismatic church because they married someone who was a member of the charismatic church, or because another family member had moved to the charismatic church.

Third, 26 or 23% the 103 respondents affirmed that they transferred to a charismatic church for unstated reasons. As it occurs in many places, there is always a

group of persons who spend a good part of their lives “church shopping and church hopping,” and many of them never settle anywhere. Like the people of Athens in the time of the apostle Paul, such persons are serving many churches without commitment to any. They are also possibly a part of the group referred to in Scriptures who are “ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth”¹ because they never stay in any one place long enough to be grounded in what they are taught.

Finally, as indicated earlier, there were those who departed for the charismatic Pentecostal church and are a part of the descendants of those who have children and grandchildren as members of the charismatic church (see Table 7). It must be remembered that one of the first things that introduced Bahamians to the charismatic movement was their search for higher education in the United States of America. Therefore, as many more individuals were exposed to charismatic Pentecostalism on campuses and in churches in the United States, more of them were willing to bring the charismatic movement back home to the Bahamas.

Effects of the Transition

The level of transitioning from classical to charismatic Pentecostalism has had some effects on the movement as a whole. Most of these have been positive, with a few falling into what may be viewed by some as a negative category. Among the positive effects would be the following.

¹ 2 Timothy 3:7.

1. For the most part, the charismatic Pentecostals in the Bahamas did not experience a protracted time of intense rejection or persecution because of their faith, as classical Pentecostals did. They became a part of the movement when their members were already exposed to a higher level of education and a higher level of socio-economic empowerment which gave them greater social acceptance. Their development was able to progress at a quicker pace because their members were better able to support the construction of modern worship facilities and to facilitate the effective use of the media from the beginning..
2. They were not as hindered in getting their message out to the masses because of their use of radio and television in the earlier period and in more modern times, by the extensive use of social media. Use of such evangelism tools created a greater level of acceptance with the younger generations.
3. The style of worship introduced by charismatics has infiltrated classical Pentecostalism, as well as other churches which have adopted some of the doctrines and worship styles of Pentecostalism. These changes include the use of praise teams, choreographers, and singing of more contemporary songs instead of the hymns.
4. The Pentecostal movement was expanded when the charismatic movement began and thereby provided a new avenue for persons to develop their spiritual relationship with God.

5. Finally, if there was any negative effect from the transitioning, it could be that a very small percentage of classical Pentecostals would have transitioned to the charismatic church.

Recommendations

Several matters that surfaced in this study point in directions which suggest that they require more attention than they are presently receiving. Consequently, this means that even with transitioning, all of the churches, both classical and charismatics, can be stronger and more effective and could eventually attract a greater number of new believers to disciple, if they could find the right formula for fulfilling their purpose as a church. “Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you, and, lo, I am with you always even unto the end of the world. Amen.”²

It is clear from the responses given to questions 5 and 10 in the survey that members are not totally clear about what type of church they are attending and what the church teaches and believes. This may be the reason why some classical Pentecostals claim that they do not believe that speaking in tongues is the initial evidence of being baptized in the Holy Spirit. This creates a problem for the church and the individual who is not clear on what he or she believes and therefore will be hindered in teaching or witnessing to others. Churches therefore ought to organize effective

² Matthew 28:19-20.

discipleship programs. Paul told Timothy, “And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.”³

Further, it is clear that some members of the church do not believe all that their local church teaches on some doctrinal matters. This means that some members will not promote or live out what they do not believe. Members of some churches will therefore be sending out messages that are opposite of what their local church teaches. These matters stunt church growth, puts a dull edge on outreach ministries, and could create confusion within the body of a local church.

There is a percentage of persons who are not committing themselves to any particular church. This does not allow for persons to grow in grace and in the knowledge of God. When the apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthian church (1 Cor 15) and to the church at Thessalonica (1 Thess 4), he was writing to clarify matters so that all of them understood the same matters in the same way so that they not be “tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive.”⁴

This study has been able to sample only a small segment of the Pentecostal movement in the Bahamas. Besides the two major classical Pentecostal groups in the Bahamas, there are several other smaller independent churches and groups of churches that are classical Pentecostals, some of which were former classical Pentecostal members.

³ 2 Timothy 2: 2.

⁴ Ephesians 4:14.

For several reasons which were mentioned in this thesis-project, some other Christian groups are regarded as being larger than the Pentecostal movement, but that does not have to be true; it is just that all of these Pentecostal groups are not considered as one single group. Therefore, the full impact of the Pentecostal movement may not be fully recognized until a proper analysis is done. This should include an analysis of the contributions made by Pentecostals since 1909 in all aspects of the religious, civic, and cultural life of the country (e.g., positions held in the private and public sectors, such as heads of government ministries, corporations, departments, the judiciary and in the field of medicine). This would be especially important since up to the first half of the twentieth century Pentecostals were regarded as being from the lower socio-economic and educational classes but have since that time proven otherwise. This study would also be important as many in the independent, non-Pentecostal churches seem to be adopting the Pentecostal doctrine and style of worship. It would be interesting to find out if there is a general or partial transitioning toward Pentecostal doctrine and why.

When I reflect on the research and findings of this study, my mind immediately reflects on two passages of Scripture. First is the prayer of Jesus in John 17 for the unity of the believers as he and his Father are one. That spiritual unity cannot be forced by organizations or the will of mankind. It can be achieved only through the Holy Spirit himself. Second, the apostle Paul informed the church at Ephesus that God equips and empowers the church to do his work in the earth by giving her apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers “for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the

ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.”

Whatever changes we may orchestrate or be led to be a part of in the body of Christ, and whatever transitioning may take place in our effort to be aligned with the prayer of Jesus for oneness, God will bring all of it to pass in his time, in his way, and by his Holy Spirit.

APPENDIX A
LETTER TO PARTICIPANTS

Dear Participant,

My name is **Franklin M. Ferguson**, a Doctor of Ministry candidate with the Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary in Boston, Massachusetts, USA.

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this Research Survey. The information you provide will help me to complete my Thesis Project. My topic is, “Transitioning From Classical To Charismatic Pentecostalism In The Bahamas: The Causes And The Effects.” This is a requirement for graduation in May 2018.

Please be assured that your answers will be kept strictly anonymous and confidential. The information that you provide will be presented only in summary form, in combination with the responses of other participants in the study. By choosing to participate in this survey, you have agreed to volunteer your service. Please know that your time and effort in so doing is greatly appreciated.

PLEASE DO NOT write your name on any of the pages of the questionnaire or put any mark that could identify you as an individual or your church.

THANK YOU for your time and effort in providing this information.

Sincerely,

Franklin M. Ferguson
Doctor of Ministry Candidate

APPENDIX B
QUESTIONNAIRE

(In order to participate in this survey, you have to be **18** years or older.)

To complete this questionnaire, you will need to put a tick [v] in the appropriate box.

1. Gender

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female

2. Age Range

- ☐ 17 or under
- ☐ 18 - 30 yrs.
- ☐ 31 - 45 yrs.
- ☐ 46 - 60 yrs.
- ☐ 61 + yrs.

3. Highest level of education obtained

- ☐ Primary School
- ☐ High School
- ☐ College or University

4. How long have you been a member of this church?

- ☐ 5 - 10 yrs.

☐ 11 - 20 yrs.

☐ 21 - 30 yrs.

☐ 31 + yrs.

5. As a Christian, which type of Pentecostal would you be classified as?

☐ Classical Pentecostal

(You believe that speaking in tongues is the initial evidence of being baptized in the Holy Spirit.)

☐ Charismatic Pentecostal

*(You **do not** believe that speaking in tongues is the initial evidence of being baptized in the Holy Spirit.)*

☐ Don't know

6. Were you ever a member of a church that teaches that speaking in tongues is the initial evidence of being baptized with the Holy Spirit?

☐ **Yes**, I am still a member.

☐ **Yes**, but I am no longer a member.

☐ **No**, I have never been a member.

7. Were your parents or grandparents members of a classical Pentecostal church?

☐ YES

☐ NO

8. Do you have children or grandchildren who are members of a charismatic Pentecostal church?

☐ YES

☐ NO

9. If you are no longer a member of a church that teaches that speaking in tongues is the initial evidence of being baptized in the Holy Spirit, why did you leave?

☐ I do not believe that speaking in tongues as initial evidence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

☐ Moved to this church with my spouse or other family member.

☐ Other reasons (state one):_____

10. Do you believe an individual can be baptized in the Holy Spirit and not ever speak in tongues?

☐ YES

☐ NO

11. Do you speak in tongues?

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Used to, but not any more

12. Do you believe the **classical** Pentecostal church in the Bahamas is growing more than the **charismatic** church?

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Don't Know

13. If your answer to # 12 is **NO**, why do you think they are not growing?

☐ Speaking in tongues is not being taught as initial evidence of being baptized in the Holy Spirit in the churches as it was before.

☐ Many people do not believe in speaking in tongues as the initial evidence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit any more.

☐ Churches are not evangelizing as they did before.

14. Do you believe the **charismatic Pentecostal church** in the Bahamas is growing more than the classical Pentecostal church?

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Don't Know

15. If your answer to 14 is **NO**, why do you think they are not?

☐ Persons are not being taught about the manifestation of the Holy Spirit in the churches as they were before.

☐ Many people believe that speaking in Tongues is the initial evidence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

☐ Churches are not evangelizing as they did before.

16. Do you believe that over the past fifty years more **non-Pentecostal** churches in the Bahamas are adopting some of the Pentecostal doctrine and style of worship?

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Don't know

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